Commentary
January 1997

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Books in Review
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Michael Anton • Wilfred M. McClay

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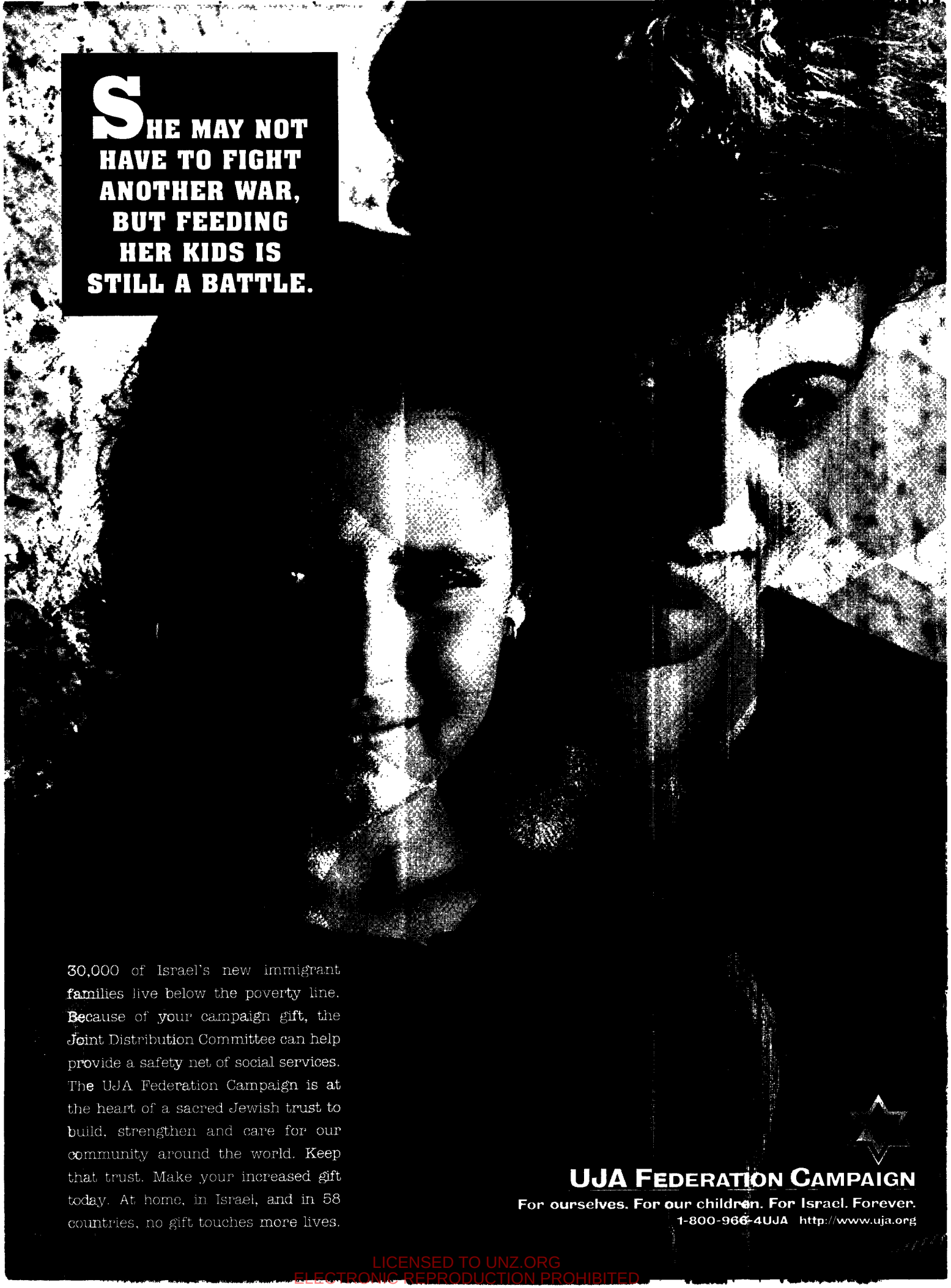
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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Missile Defense

To the Editor:

I am not in a position to comment on the merits and accuracy of Angelo M. Codevilla's main ideas ["Defenseless America," September 1996], but I can clearly refute his allegations that Ukraine is cooperating with Libya in the field of nuclear and/or missile technology. . . .

The following is an excerpt from a letter I wrote to the *Washington Times*, where these unfounded allegations were first published:

> Allegations of a "strategic alliance" between Ukraine and Libya are absolutely groundless. Moreover, they can only be considered an attempt to cast a shadow on the growing U.S.-Ukraine partnership, friendship, and cooperation.
>
> Ukraine has always been and remains faithful to its international commitments, especially on such a sensitive problem as UN sanctions, to say nothing of transferring weapons technology.
>
> My country scrupulously adheres to the sanctions against Libya that were adopted by the UN, despite the difficult economic situation we are currently in. Moreover, due to the comprehensive government system of export control, which assures the prevention of transfers of goods and technologies regulated by nuclear nonproliferation treaties, an attempt several years ago to ship a sensitive solid rocket fuel component through Ukraine to Libya was prevented. . . .
>
> Particularly mendacious are allegations of the transfer of nuclear technology by Ukraine to Libya. Having signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation treaty in 1994 and having rid itself of nuclear weapons on June 1, 1996, my country has demonstrated an example of internationally responsible behavior which has been recognized and highly praised by the U.S. and by the leaders of the G-7 group. . . .
>
> Ukraine has never been cited or officially warned by the U.S. about any violations of UN sanctions.
>
> Ukraine has always been and remains a responsible member of the international community, faithful to its international obligations, including UN sanctions.
>
> It is pity that a respected magazine like Commentary picked up ungrounded and false allegations against my country without checking their accuracy.

Yuri Shcherbak
Ambassador
Embassy of Ukraine
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Ukraine, contrary to Angelo M. Codevilla's assertions, does not have a "secret strategic-cooperation relationship with Libya" for the transfer of missile technology. Nor is Ukraine negotiating with China "to sell the technology for SS-18 missiles." In fact, Ukraine has a model comprehensive export-control system which operates in accordance with the guidelines of international agencies.

How outrageous are the assertions of Mr. Codevilla? Ukraine has no SS-18 missile technology. Only SS-24 missiles and small components of the SS-19 were manufactured in Ukraine and all were dismantled and removed by June 1, 1996. Ukraine is the only country in the world to have voluntarily and unilaterally disposed of its entire nuclear arsenal and acceded to the Nuclear Nonproliferation treaty as a nonnuclear state.

Askold S. Lozynskyj
Ukrainian Congress
Committee of America, Inc.
New York City

To the Editor:

Angelo M. Codevilla's numerous distortions and

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omissions of fact to support his contention that the United States should quickly deploy a national ballistic-missile-defense system reveal the hollowness of both his arguments and the threat which they purport to answer.

Mr. Codevilla attempts to frame the current threat by asserting that in March 1996 China, "in one of the most ominous and underreported developments in the post-Soviet atomic age, openly threatened to hit Los Angeles with a nuclear-tipped missile. . . ." In fact, this incident occurred in December 1995. As reported in the *New York Times* on January 24, 1996, former Assistant Secretary of Defense Charles W. Freeman, Jr. traveled to China for meetings with senior Chinese officials. During a January debriefing with President Clinton's National Security Adviser, Freeman quoted an unnamed Chinese official as "asserting that China could act militarily against Taiwan without fear of intervention by the United States because American leaders 'care more about Los Angeles than they do about Taiwan.'" Freeman characterized this statement as an indirect threat by China to use nuclear weapons against the United States.

Clearly this was not an open threat. That it was underreported only suggests that journalists (and national-security officials) understood China was engaging in atomic saber-rattling. . . . More important than one Chinese official's blustering is the U.S. response: two naval groups, including the nuclear-powered aircraft carriers *USS Independence* and *USS Nimitz*, were dispatched to patrol off Taiwan during and after China's live-fire exercises in the Taiwan Strait (March 12-20) to demonstrate U.S. intentions to help defend Taiwan.

Mr. Codevilla argues that "the threat posed by ballistic missiles has, in fact, never been more urgent." In fact, most scholars maintain that the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962 is the closest we have come to nuclear war (U.S. forces were placed on DEFCON 2; DEFCON 1 is maximum readiness for war). Furthermore, it should be obvious that the threat posed for more than three decades by placing tens of thousands of warheads on hair-trigger alert in two countries openly antagonistic to each other was far "more urgent" than that presented by either China's relatively small nuclear arsenal or any of the so-called "rogue" states (none of which actually has deployed nuclear weapons). . . .

Returning to China, Mr. Codevilla warns that it ". . . already has intercontinental missiles that are exact copies of our old but excellent Titan II." Yet the Dong Feng-5A, China's only ICBM capable of reaching the United States, is merely generically similar to the Titan II, not an "exact" copy. Furthermore, only seven are deployed. That is hardly a cause for major concern, except perhaps for the Chinese technicians who maintain them. Our Titan II's were first deployed in 1963; they used volatile liquid fuel, proved difficult to maintain, and were highly susceptible to accidents. . . . The last of the 54 Titan II's was retired in 1987. . . .

Mr. Codevilla adopts a strangely revisionist view of the cold war, claiming that the Soviet Union was "a relatively benign regime, which would in any case be restrained (so the reasoning went) by the very awesomeness of nuclear weapons and by what was then known as the balance of terror." (Has Mr. Codevilla forgotten that Stalin—hardly the paradigm of a predictable and controllable national leader—had his finger on the proverbial button from 1949 until his death in March 1953?) He asserts that all this has changed, that ballistic missiles are now "in the hands of people who run the gamut of human qualities from the responsible to the nasty, the unpredictable, and the uncontrollable." Thus, "whoever wants missiles is likely to get them, and whoever wants to use them probably will." The spread of technology and the end of the cold war have certainly made ballistic missiles more widely available, but it does not follow that national missile defenses are the best and only solution.

Logically, opponents who are equally matched and generally restrained and reasonable will refrain from conflict, knowing the disadvantages of war outweigh the advantages. A hopelessly outmatched opponent should likewise abstain from launching an attack, realizing his one weapon is no match for his opponent's thousands. (Madmen—by definition—will not invoke reason and are thus undeterrable). Yet Mr. Codevilla asserts that ". . . missile-wielding governments could blackmail *us* into acquiescing in their power grabs." By this reasoning, the United States—the sole remaining superpower and possessor of the most formidable conventional and nuclear forces on earth—is helpless in the face of any nation with even one nuclear weapon (or the potential to build or acquire it). That this ruse failed in the recent case of China goes unexamined.

Betraying his ignorance, Mr. Codevilla states, "Technically, defending against ballistic missiles presents a challenge not much greater than building them." If this were true, we would have built defenses long ago; after all, our first Atlas ICBM's were deployed in 1959 and we have built more than 6,100 ballistic missiles since then. . . .

To date, we have spent nearly $100 billion (in constant 1996 dollars) on numerous ballistic-missile-defense programs since the mid-1950's, including $51 billion for the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and theater-missile defenses since 1983. Why then do we have so little to show for it? From the late 1950's through 1965, research and development on the Nike-Zeus system consumed more than $3 billion. The follow-on Nike-X (part of the nationwide Sentinel system to counter the then-developing Chinese missile threat) cost another $9 billion from 1964 to 1968 before it too was abandoned following concerns about high costs and the danger of surrounding American cities with hundreds of nuclear-tipped interceptors.

Next came Safeguard, a scaled-back effort to defend not cities and people but 150 Minuteman ICBM's. Safeguard—which ultimately cost $22 billion—was eventually deployed in North Dakota in the mid-1970's. But it operated for only a few months before the Army deactivated it in 1975, belatedly determining that high annual operating costs greatly exceeded the system's

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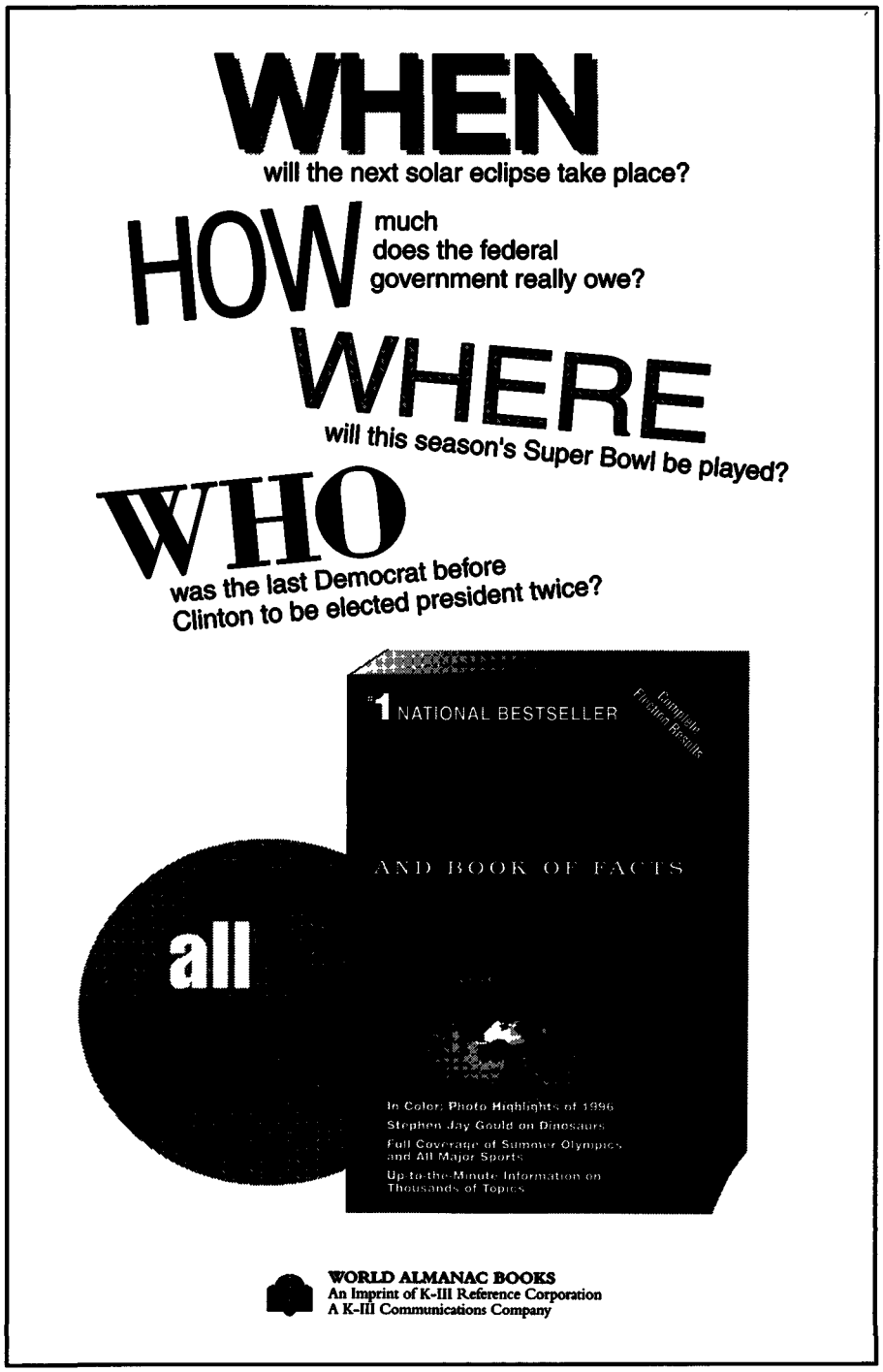
limited defensive benefits.

Mr. Codevilla makes no mention of Safeguard, although he alludes to the Sentinel program. Instead he charges: "If, year after year, the U.S. government has decided not to deploy defenses, it is not for lack of technically competent means." He cites concerns about how many warheads might "leak" through a defensive shield, but adds "such doubts were not the reason the defensive complex was never built." But it *was* built. It is clear why Mr. Codevilla fails to mention this fact, because to do so would undermine his central argument that only a lack of national will prevents us from erecting missile defenses. It is less understandable why he lays full blame for our inability to deploy such defenses on the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) treaty of 1972. This is akin to saying that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The national controversy ignited by Sentinel and Safeguard led (in no small part) to the ABM treaty, not vice versa.

Mr. Codevilla also misrepresents several current missile-defense technologies. Describing the Space and Missile Tracking System (SMTS), he claims these satellites "would extend the range, accuracy, and effectiveness of every American interceptor against all kinds and speeds of warheads." This might well be true in theory, but the SMTS does not yet exist; neither do the interceptors. Even if they did, they have not been field-tested to verify that the sort of system integration of which he speaks is possible.

Similarly, the Army's Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) is touted as a system that can "intercept missiles more than 100 miles away from cities." Perhaps some day, but to date THAAD has failed all three of its flight tests. The Navy's Upper Tier system "can also rely on information from satellites to hit a warhead over 1,000 miles away." Flight tests may eventually verify this claim, but at this writing Upper Tier has achieved only 42 of 43 test objectives (as defined by its contractor), with number 43 being the critical one: the demonstrated ability to intercept a target (two flight tests have failed).

Mr. Codevilla argues, "Each of these weapons would be useful by itself, and all would be more useful together." Yet compiling and testing the computer code



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necessary to connect the various components has always been the most complex part of missile defense. Anyone who has ever tried to install and operate software and hardware on a home computer knows it is one thing to talk about system integration and quite another to make it an error-free reality. By glossing over this fundamental issue, Mr. Codevilla grossly distorts the magnitude of the problem facing missile-defense scientists.

Mr. Codevilla's faith in missile-defense technology colors his thinking in another troubling way; it leads him to avoid discussion of *any* nontechnological means of defending against missile attack. For example, since 1987 the 31-member Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) has helped to control the spread of ballistic missiles. All six nations that currently possess ICBM's (including China) belong to it. MTCR is not perfect, but when it works it does one thing no weapon system ever can—prevent the further spread of ballistic-missile technologies.

Or consider the bipartisan Cooperative Threat Reduction program, commonly known as Nunn-Lugar. Since its creation in 1991, Nunn-Lugar has assisted the states of the former Soviet Union in dismantling their nuclear weapons and safeguarding their nuclear materials, helping to pay for the deactivation and disabling of at least 40 SS-19 and 46 SS-24 ICBM's in Ukraine armed with approximately 700 warheads. By late 1996, Nunn-Lugar funding will have helped to eliminate 176 ICBM's in Ukraine carrying 1,240 warheads, at a cost of $185 million ($149,193.55 per warhead). Additional funding is assisting in the destruction of bombers and missile launchers in the former Soviet Union, including $70 million to help eliminate 104 SS-18 ICBM's in Kazakhstan carrying more than 1,000 half-megaton warheads ($70,000 per warhead, a real bargain).

Mr. Codevilla fails to explain why it is more sensible—on military, economic, or political grounds—to devote tens of billions of dollars to a *potential* remedy to the ballistic-missile threat during a missile's 15-30 minutes of flight than to spend just a few billion dollars on programs such as Nunn-Lugar and agreements like START and the MTCR to ensure the *certain* destruction of that missile on the ground before it is even launched.

Even if the myriad technical challenges could be resolved and the money found to pay for the program, no ballistic-missile-defense system, even one incorporating space-based components, would completely protect the population of the United States from nuclear, chemical, or biological attack. Because the system could never be realistically tested, no one could be certain it would destroy every missile and/or warhead it encountered. Unlike our recent military encounter with Iraq in September—when

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two separate waves of cruise missiles were deemed necessary to destroy fixed air-defense installations—there are no second chances in ballistic-missile defense.

Most important, the approach advocated by Mr. Codevilla would have *no effect* on weapons delivered via cruise missiles, aircraft, ships, or trucks. Why would any terrorist group or nation resort to the most expensive, time-consuming, highly visible, and potentially defeatable mode of attack when simpler, cheaper, and more expeditious means are readily available? Mr. Codevilla completely ignores this show-stopping issue, leaving readers mystified as to why he considers ballistic-missile defenses essential to protecting America in the post-cold-war world.

STEPHEN I. SCHWARTZ
Director, U.S. Nuclear Weapons Cost Study Project
Brookings Institution
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

. . . Angelo M. Codevilla is one of the Western world's most effective criers of wolf. After having read his recent COMMENTARY article, "Defenseless America," I say, good for him once again! . . .

DAVID C. PHILLIPS
Bakersfield, California

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA writes:

I wish that Ambassador Shcherbak's and Askold S. Lozynskyj's outraged claims of innocence were justified. Alas, in May 1996 the U.S. government officially protested to the government of Ukraine over its sale of SS-18 missile components to China. The U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency's *Military Intelligence Digest* details an agreement reached between Ukraine's president, Leonid Kuchma, and the Chinese in December 1995 in which the Ukrainians agreed to supply China with various items of missile technology. The same DIA document reports that President Kuchma formed a committee of thirteen high-ranking Ukrainian officials to conduct the sale of strategic goods to the government of Libya. The U.S. government is in fact convinced that Ukraine has already sold to Libya an undetermined number of SS-21's or Scud-B missiles. That is why the U.S. Foreign Operations Law for Fiscal Year 1997 includes a prohibition on aid to Ukraine.

In response to Stephen I. Schwartz, I did indeed state that China's threat to hit Los Angeles with missiles occurred in March 1996. Along with everyone else, I dismissed the unnamed Chinese official's remarks to Charles W. Freeman in December 1995 as mere wind. But I took the threat seriously in March when China actually started targeting Taiwan with missiles and, as Mr. Schwartz notes, conducted "live-fire exercises in the Taiwan Strait." Is Mr. Schwartz's point that the threat should never have been taken seriously? But why not? He writes that two U.S. aircraft carriers were dispatched in March to patrol off Taiwan "to demonstrate U.S. intentions to help defend Taiwan." But since

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these ships do not carry any anti-missile devices, they could not have helped defend Taiwan in the least. Nor could anything in the U.S. arsenal have prevented a Chinese missile from landing on Los Angeles if the Chinese had chosen to launch one.

Mr. Schwartz is doubly mistaken about China's Dong Feng-5A. So exact a copy is it of the Titan II that when engineers of the Martin company, manufacturers of the Titan, were shown blueprints of the Dong Feng-5A by U.S. intelligence, they noted that the Chinese had even followed Martin's drafting format. Far from being unreliable, versions of this missile are still the basis for most U.S. military heavy-space launches. Moreover, liquid fuel does not degrade the missile at all unless one keeps the tanks constantly filled, as the U.S. did and as one can be sure the Chinese do not. The seven missiles that the Chinese have pointed at us, few as they are, far outnumber the number of U.S. anti-missile devices—which is precisely zero.

Where did Mr. Schwartz get the idea that I regarded the Soviet regime as "relatively benign"? I wrote that *others* so regarded it: the Brookings library, I am sure, is full of literature on the Soviet Union's reliability as a nuclear partner, and if Mr. Schwartz goes far enough back, I bet he will even find praise of Stalin. It is his colleagues, not I, who need lessons on the evils of Communism.

Mr. Schwartz agrees that missiles and nuclear weapons are now more widespread than ever. Incomprehensible, then, is his objection to my statement that those possessing them run the gamut of human qualities, or to my judgment that the threat is more urgent—I did not say more massive—than ever.

Just as inscrutable is the logic by which Mr. Schwartz denies the possibility that the U.S. could be led by fear of missile attack to acquiesce in a rogue nation's power grab. Common sense counsels that we not risk millions of American lives for marginal interests. Just what would Brookings advise the President to do were a Chinese attack on Taiwan accompanied by a few nuclear-missile explosions offshore? What course of action would Mr. Schwartz counsel if Iran, once it gets nuclear weapons, were to grab Kuwait?

Mr. Schwartz calls me ignorant for not realizing that if missile defenses were technically feasible they would have been built long ago. He should repeat after me: *post hoc ergo propter hoc* ain't good logic. And then he should do penance by reading all the nontechnical arguments contrived by his colleagues over the last ten years to oppose missile defenses. No lessons in logic, however, can cure Mr. Schwartz's delusion that the ABM treaty—and the virtual cessation of serious anti-missile programs, which he both denies and affirms as the consequence thereof—was the result of popular demand. Politicians who support the ABM treaty speak of it as little as possible and then only in Aesopian language. As for the American people, they have never understood the treaty, but insofar as they do understand it, they oppose it.

Mr. Schwartz asks a meaningful question: why do we have so little to show for the billions of dollars spent on all the anti-missile programs since the 1960's? He suggests that I would answer this question by invoking a "lack of national will." Yet never in a decade's writings on this matter have I ascribed our defenselessness to the American people's lack of enthusiasm for an effective missile-defense policy. On the contrary, the polls, as I have often mentioned, invariably show overwhelming support for it. What I have aimed to show, rather, is how the bureaucracy, animated in part by ideas emanating from places like Brookings, has crafted elaborate regulations to make sure that monies spent in the name of missile defense would not purchase even one device capable of destroying missiles. Most of the restrictions imposed by the bureaucracy on the use of technology come under the category of "Compliance Review Certifications"—compliance with the ABM treaty, that is—and remain classified.

Perhaps innocently, Mr. Schwartz mentions that the Safeguard anti-missile system deployed in North Dakota provided benefits too small to justify its cost. Correct. But why? Because people of Mr. Schwartz's proclivities succeeded in limiting the deployment to a single site. This is like paying the full purchase price of a house and then being allowed to put only one shingle on the roof. Mr. Schwartz's suggestion that Safeguard's shortcomings were technical is pure *chutzpah*.

So is his charge that THAAD has failed its first three flight tests. Mr. Schwartz should know that two of the failures had to do with test instrumentation irrelevant to the system's performance. And he surely knows that the Clinton administration has imposed upon the THAAD and Upper Tier systems an absolute prohibition against the use of data from external sensors. Thus the THAAD guidance system is not allowed to use satellite data to point its radar or to align its guidance system. The Upper Tier system is not even allowed to use radar data from other Navy ships. Does the fact that with such data these systems would work all too well not tell us something about the administration's priorities? In any event, to approve of such restrictions and then blame the systems for sub-optimal performance is dishonest.

Mr. Schwartz is correct that the SMTS satellites and the interceptors whose performance they would improve do not yet exist. But again, this is not, as he implies, due to a lack of technology. It is because the Clinton administration has deliberately delayed them and diverted the money Congress appropriated for this purpose. Forty-one members of Congress have sued the President on this issue, and in October the nation's second highest court gave him one more chance to comply with duly enacted national-security laws, warning that it would not countenance his disregard.

As to the alleged difficulties of using various anti-missile systems at the same time, Mr. Schwartz is stuck with a concept foisted on the original SDI program, namely, that all weapons be centrally coordinated. This is another self-imposed difficulty. Fortunately, our military services have learned that in-

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dependent operations are an elegant solution to the problem of software complexity.

At the beginning of his letter Mr. Schwartz admits that missiles are more widespread than ever and getting more so. Yet toward the end he praises the Missile Technology Control Regime for helping to control their spread. Go figure. China is a member of MTCR, yet when China sold missiles to Pakistan last year, the Clinton administration found that other interests required it to act as if MTCR did not exist. We know it does not exist for Russia or Ukraine, either. Maybe it exists at Brookings.

Mr. Schwartz bids me pay due attention to the Nunn-Lugar program. Well, this summer, when I met with leaders of Russia's parliament, I asked for their evaluation of the uses to which the Nunn-Lugar funds had been put. They replied that they had no idea what had happened to the money. Neither does the U.S. embassy, or U.S. intelligence. We know the money has been sent. Period. Mr. Schwartz mentions that the Russians have taken Soviet missiles out of Ukraine and Kazakhstan. But the impression that these missiles have been destroyed is groundless. No Westerner knows where they are today, to whom they may be sold, or who may use them against whom tomorrow.

Mr. Schwartz's penultimate argument, that no one can guarantee before the fact how any device will work, applies to every household gizmo as well as it does to anti-missile devices. And his final salvo, to the effect that defending against ballistic missiles will not defend against truck bombs is, though true, as irrelevant as the fact that cardiac bypasses do nothing for cancer.

Finally, let me thank David C. Phillips for his kind words.

Liberalism and the Culture

TO THE EDITOR:

"Liberalism and the Culture: A Turning of the Tide?" [October 1996] is a useful reminder that many liberals rather enjoy Western civilization. Its superstructure, at least, is more or less to their taste—remove an I-beam here, a keystone there, cut some doors in the façade, splash some flashier paint about, and they would be willing to pronounce it comfortable and attractive.

I expect Norman Podhoretz would agree that intellectuals of more-or-less liberal persuasion still bear a large part of the burden of maintaining that very superstructure, and often bring real enthusiasm to the work. . . . The problem is that they really do not care much for the foundations. At least, they find it difficult to think seriously about them. Unlike façades and amenities, foundations have an adamantine and uncompromising quality. Defending them implies a posture of irrelativism—for liberals, the greatest of sins.

Mr. Podhoretz's analysis of David Denby's *Great Books* nicely illustrates the problem. After the hydrophobic Left has hammered at those foundations for a generation, Denby finds it timely to "join the discourse [to] make it aesthetically and morally alive." We can anticipate the combativeness of his participation from this warning: "If parents are not to feel defeated by the media and pop culture they must *get over their reluctance to make choices that are based on clear assertions of moral values*" (emphasis added). Yet Denby cannot bring himself to say that parents *must* assert morality; for him, such directness evokes the "iron moralism" of the likes of William J. Bennett. Denby's nuanced and sophisticated marshmallow moralism is exemplified by his distaste

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for acquaintances who have "turned themselves into authoritarians." He and his wife, in contrast, decline to guide their children "like missionaries leading the savages to light." . . .

The quality of the liberal contribution to moral discourse can be anticipated from the examples cited by Mr. Podhoretz: Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. thinks it would be very inconvenient and unpragmatic if the United States were torn apart by grievance-mongers; Robert Hughes of *Time* magazine takes up the conservative arguments while snarling and snapping at the hand that feeds him; and Denby suspects that religion might have some value because it implies a hierarchy of taste. . . . Such contributions are not very encouraging on their own merits, and Mr. Podhoretz rightly takes them merely as harbingers of a turning of the tide.

This may be so, although I predict a more cataclysmic end for the postmodernizers. My vision is that they will some day be discovered in their multitudes sitting glassy-eyed before their word processors, standing paralyzed behind their lecterns, stretched out with rigid limbs in their offices. I see them advancing in a densely serried phalanx to their inevitable doom: they are all simultaneously going to bore themselves to death. This prophecy came to me five years ago when I set out to read through the 107th MLA convention program. My pulse almost stopped on page 1,400 with "Silence and Mut(e)ilation: White Writing in *Foe*." When I came out of a coma three days later, the doctors told me that one more colon, one more conjunction, or one more parenthesis and I would have been a goner.

Whatever excitement the postmodern project generated by its novelty has long since exhausted itself. Its standard prose is stupefying. Its "critiques and analyses" drivelsome and monotonous. Its sentiments hackneyed and bogus. Its proposed objectives pointless. It cannot stand still and it has nowhere to go. The end is inevitable.

What remains when either the tide recedes or the petrified remains are carted away by the custodial staff will be the destruction that has been wrought. How that is to be repaired I cannot visualize. The Denbys may have some useful role in repairing the superstructure, but they have nothing to contribute to shoring up the foundations.

JOHN N. FRARY
LU/English Newsletter
New Brunswick, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

One can only be struck by—and dismayed at—how far today's liberals have strayed from the liberalism that created our nation. Our founding ethos is apparent in the sadly neglected *Federalist 57*, attributed to James Madison. This document, arguing in support of the House of Representatives proposed under the Constitution, made it clear that the American concept of freedom offered no artificial barriers to individual advancement.

Madison began *Federalist 57* by taking note of a "class of citizens" unsympathetic to the populace at large. His description of this class is as good a summary of the mindset of today's liberals as can be found: persons seeking the "ambitious sacrifice of the many to the aggrandizement of the few."

It was Madison's belief that leaders should work for "the common good of the society" and hold "communion of interests and sympathy of sentiments" with the people, failing which "every government degenerates into tyranny." . . .

The cause of liberalism will be revived if we make clear to today's "liberals" that we will not tolerate their machinations toward tyranny for all—all but themselves, of course. Our "liberals" are hardly devoted to liberty, but the rest of us are.

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

If it were anyone but Norman Podhoretz who had penned "Liberalism and the Culture: A Turning of the Tide?" I might have shrugged if off as an elegantly written bit of wishful thinking. But scorning Podhoretzian punditry ain't prudent, so I will watch (and hope that he is right about) the culture and feel his pain if he is proved wrong.

DOUG GLANT
Seattle, Washington

Bible Translation

TO THE EDITOR:

Robert Alter's article, "Beyond King James" [September 1996], struck home

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to me with a poignancy somewhat unusual for a typical COMMENTARY article. For I am a Catholic priest who must, *per officium*, preach each Sunday using one of those newfangled translations that Mr. Alter so effectively laments. Although he did not mention it by name, I am sure he would agree that his strictures abundantly apply to the aptly named New American Bible, a translation officially commissioned by the American Catholic bishops and supposedly representing the finest flower of American Catholic biblical scholarship. For not only does this translation seek to "disambiguate" every nuance from the Hebrew and Greek, but it does so with a relentlessness unusual even in our hipster times.

One of the most notorious passages of this translation (this time from the Greek New Testament and not the Hebrew Bible, Mr. Alter's focus) has now become a byword for cliché-ridden obtuseness. Where the traditional phrase says "there was no room at the inn," this rendition for some reason renders it: "there was no room at the place where travelers lodge," a bizarre four-word circumlocution for the perfectly understandable one-syllable term "inn," a translation that is, moreover, bound to conjure up, however subliminally, the motel chain TraveLodge with its tousled Teddy Bear enticing motorists with the billboard promise of "A Good Night's Rest." . . .

My observations only reinforce, from the Greek side of things, Mr. Alter's observations on the Hebrew side. But I was puzzled that he never mentioned the merits of the Revised Standard Version (RSV). The puzzle arises because of his statement that

> to this day, the Authorized Version of 1611 (the "King James Bible"), for all its inaccuracies, archaisms, and insistently Jacobean rhythm and tone, remains the closest we have yet come to the distinctive experience of the original.

This is true, but it was precisely the achievement of the RSV to have based its translation on the King James Version (KJV), and it did so mostly by simply removing the blemishes and archaisms Mr. Alter refers to. True, some of the Hebrew cadences are missing, as Mr. Alter notes, but that is probably something that can be picked up only by learning Hebrew, not an easy desideratum to fulfill among our increasingly monoglot seminarians. But still, the majesty of the King James, and behind it the Hebrew original, lives on in the RSV.

I had occasion last summer to reread Abraham Joshua Heschel's two-volume work on the Hebrew prophets, approximately one-fifth of which consists of direct quotations from the prophets themselves. He used the RSV for his text, and I was once more struck by the unusual rhetorical power of the prophets as conveyed by Rabbi Heschel's judicious selection of direct citations. . . .

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J.
Regis University
Denver, Colorado

TO THE EDITOR:

As any honest scholar regardless of his religious affiliation will admit, the history of the translation of the Bible into the English language is, for all intents and purposes, intrinsically connected to the zeal of the Protestant Reformers to get the Scriptures into the hands of the ordinary believer so that he might interpret the Word of God for himself. Thus it is rather ironic that Robert Alter, although he does not say so in as many words in his excellent article, presents a cogent argument that the reason so many readers and hearers find the entire range of contemporary English translations of the Bible so disappointing lies precisely in the *condescension* of the transla-

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tors toward their audiences, whether these be in the classroom or the church pew.

Mr. Alter is quite correct in his assertion that most modern translators do not content themselves with representing the texts of the Hebrew—and, for Christians, the Greek (New Testament)—Scriptures in clear and understandable English so that readers and listeners who do not have the benefit of fluency in the ancient languages may nonetheless understand the biblical text and, if they are believers, appropriate its message in their individual and ecclesial lives. Rather, these translators engage in a double act of condescension to their audiences: first, the translated text must be at the lowest common linguistic level, regardless of the level at which the biblical authors themselves wrote; second, the English version must not only be a translation, but an explanation, lest the reader or listener miss the point which the translator views as *the* point of the Scripture in question.

My only disappointment with Mr. Alter's article was its omission of the New American Bible from its list of influential modern English translations of the Bible which richly deserve criticism not only for their rhetorical poverty but also for what he termed "philological heresy." Unfortunately, the NAB is among the most influential translations, as it is among the most widely used in official Catholic worship. . . .

I hope that Mr. Alter's contribution to the current debate over the language of biblical translations will inspire other scholars to overcome the monopoly now exercised by translators who, in the name of making the sacred texts available to the masses, condescend to the very people whom they are called to serve. . . .

[REV.] JOHN-PETER PHAM
Champaign, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

In his fascinating article, Robert Alter points out that the Torah illustrates the diligence of Rebekah toward Abraham's servant, Eliezer, through its constant repetition of the humble letter *vav*, which signifies "and."

There is another way in which the Torah illustrates Rebekah's diligence, using a word that has two letters, *gam*, meaning also. In Genesis 24:19, Rebekah says to Eliezer: "I will also give to your camels," using the word *gam*. In verse 25, she says: "There is also a place [for you] to lodge," again using *gam*.

In the Torah, the word *gam* always indicates the completely unexpected. Eve not only takes the forbidden fruit, which is bad enough, but *also* gives it to Adam (Genesis 3:6). Since Adam was audacious enough to eat the fruit of one forbidden tree, God fears that he may *also* be audacious enough to eat the fruit of the tree of life (Genesis 3:22).

To take another example: God tells Noah to gather into the ark all the animals of the world, including *also* those which he is least likely to be able to collect, the birds of the sky (Genesis 7:3). . . .

Thus, the word *gam*, which Rebekah uses twice to Eliezer, indicates that she is doing much more than she might reasonably have been expected to do.

Like the repetition of *vav*, which Mr. Alter has ably pointed out, the repetition of *gam* is lost in the translation. Indeed, each *gam* is significant in the Torah, but fades into oblivion in the pen of the translator, however able he might be.

GERSHON HEPNER
Los Angeles, California

ROBERT ALTER writes:

As Father Oakes and Reverend Pham justly observe, my strictures against contemporary Bible translations also apply to the New American Bible, a text I no doubt should have included in my footnote about recent English versions. I see the point of Father Oakes's argument for the Revised Standard Version. It does correct the more egregious misconstruals of the Hebrew in the King James Version as well as winnowing out the more conspicuously archaic elements. I must add, however, that the revisers had a less sure sense of English style than their 1611 predecessors, so that in terms of rhythm and diction, the RSV is often flatter than the 17th-century original, just a little less grand. In any case, even if one imagines a KJV with all the errors corrected and the archaisms updated, the RSV remains a translation that in many pervasive ways does not grasp the distinctive stylistic features of the Hebrew or attempt to replicate them in English. That is what I have tried to do, as a kind of experiment in the possibilities of Bible translation, in my new English version of Genesis.

Reverend Pham's notion of condescension to the reader is a wonderfully apt way of putting precisely the sort of thing to which I objected in my article. No serious work of literature, and no translation worth its salt, has ever managed to work by condescending to the reader.

Gershon Hepner's comments on *gam* illustrate how tricky translation can be. Despite his confidence on this matter, the term by no means *always* indicates "the completely unexpected." (The best way to check the validity of such claims is to make one's way, guided by a Hebrew concordance, through all the occurrences of the word in the biblical corpus.) But at times it does in fact clearly designate something quite unexpected, and in these instances it has a stronger force than "also." Thus, when the adolescent Joseph reports his first dream, he says, in my version, "and, look, my sheaf arose and actually stood up" (Genesis 37:7). This was one of those moments when I felt obliged to put aside my principle of not translating according to context because the *gam* before "stood up" required a less inert adverb than the simple additive "also."

Labor

TO THE EDITOR:

It is not surprising to find in the pages of COMMENTARY a vicious anti-labor article by Amity Shlaes bemoaning "Labor's Return" [October 1996]. Miss Shlaes would prefer us to go back some 35 years in American political life when labor was concentrated primarily in blue-collar industries. She cites labor's support of John F. Kennedy: "[T]he private-sector unions of earlier days shared JFK's vision of a rising tide lifting all boats." Unfortunately, she conveniently forgets that these same boats, now controlled

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by multinational corporations, have been used to export most of our industrial power, and the jobs that go with it, in seeking out the cheapest labor costs available on a global scale.

The attack on the increasing clout of public-sector unions is just another way of attacking government itself. It is time that neoconservative elitists understood that "free trade" can never be free if it is not fair to all involved. But since it is not so easy to export the public sector of our economy in search of cheap labor, they have now chosen to attack reinvigorated public-sector unions in the belief that hampering the political energies of these unions will lead to reducing the cost, i.e., taxes, of government.

It is also true that all of us realize that to maintain and improve civilized society takes public money. It is too dangerous to leave the political arena to the vicissitudes of the "Forbes 400" and their wannabes.

Who is really fueling the fire of class warfare?

HAROLD OSTROFF
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

. . . As a former director of the Jewish Labor Committee in Canada who has spent more than 30 years working with unions, and as a Member of Parliament for many years who has seen at first hand the hard lives of the workers and the poor whom I represented, I must respond to Amity Shlaes's article, which is riddled with misstatements, omissions, and distortions of the truth.

The article criticizes the $35 million spent by labor unions in the last election, mainly in support of Democratic candidates, but does not say that in almost every case the decision to support these candidates was made openly after debate by the unions concerned, or that most unions made it possible for members who disagreed with such support to get a refund of that part of their dues allocated for this purpose.

Why did not Miss Shlaes compare the way unions arrived at their decision to support candidates sympathetic to their objectives with the quiet, surreptitious way in which corporations and wealthy Americans support their favorite candidates? They do not even report the money they spend to their shareholders. . . .

Miss Shlaes says that thousands of union employees were working full time to lobby against Republican candidates and their policies. I hope that is true, but she does not write about the tens of thousands of business executives who worked for the Republicans. Why the silence?

Miss Shlaes seems to object to "labor's latest battle cry, 'America Needs a Raise.'" Why? Does she not know that the U. S. has the highest percentage of people living in poverty of any industrialized country in the Western world? . . . I presume she lives in New York City: has she walked through parts of Harlem and seen how people there live? . . .

Miss Shlaes is hostile to the increasing growth of unions among public-service workers. Why? Aren't they entitled to get together to form unions which will work to protect and, it is hoped, improve their conditions? Governments—federal, state, and municipal—faced with growing deficits are

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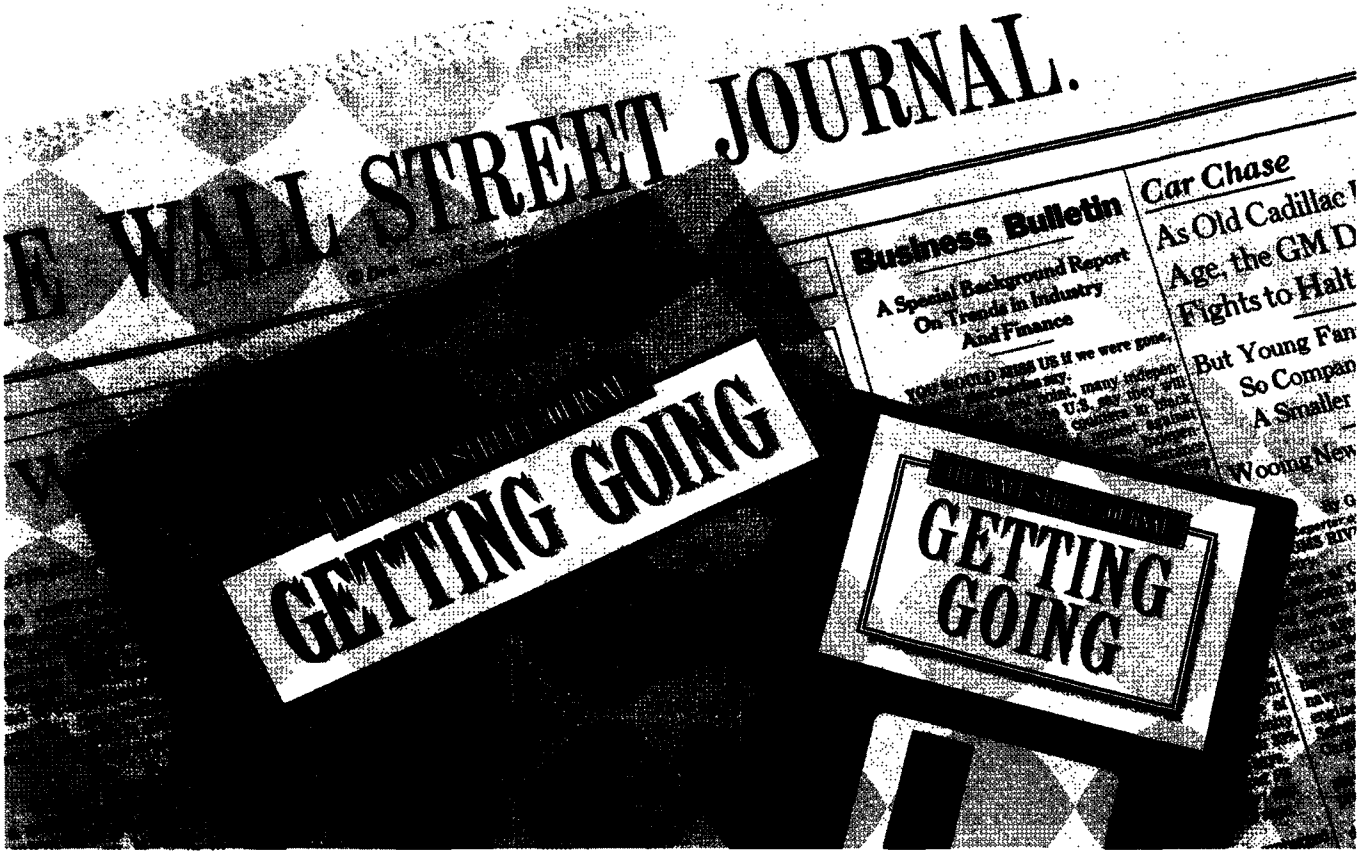

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downsizing their workforces, and workers . . . are losing the jobs they had for many years which permitted them to live with some comfort and dignity. . . . Is it surprising that they are beginning to fight back?

Miss Shlaes claims that because unions believe in more active government, they are opposed to a growing, expanding private sector in the American economy. That is an ideological point of view which is not based on any universally accepted economic theory. . . .

Yes, unions opposed NAFTA. They support fair trade. . . . But when, for example, auto workers in Canada and the U.S., employed by companies earning billions of dollars for their shareholders and paying bloated salaries in the millions to their CEO's, find their $20-to-$30-an-hour jobs disappearing because they are being taken by workers in Mexico or South Korea earning $3 an hour, is it any wonder that they opposed NAFTA?

Some months ago, while I was in Washington, D.C., I went into a GAP store situated right across the street from the Mayflower Hotel. There were clothes for sale produced in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Northern Mariana Islands, Thailand, Singapore, Honduras, Sri Lanka, and the United Arab Emirates. Miss Shlaes must have some idea of the starvation wages workers in those countries receive. She must know that thousands of children work long hours every day. Doesn't she care?

Garment and textile-workers' unions in Canada, the U.S., and Western Europe have begun a campaign to help change these deplorable, disgusting, degrading situations. It is because they know the downside of "free trade" that unions opposed NAFTA. Yes, in part it was to protect themselves, but in part it was to help those exploited in third-world countries.

DAVID ORLIKOW
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

AMITY SHLAES writes:

Of course I share the letter writers' concern for the working American. But Harold Ostroff and David Orlikow treat organized labor as if it were one with the American worker. The point of my article was that big labor and the American worker are increasingly parting ways. Laws originally written to regulate unions and companies in the private sector are now being exploited to facilitate a political-interest group's desperate search for a constituency. When the AFL-CIO and other unions cannot attract enough members of their own, they try to get government to coerce workers into providing them with funding. New evidence of such efforts showed up just lately, when the AFL-CIO announced it would lobby for an executive order from the President requiring federal employees to pay the equivalent of union dues even when they have chosen to stay out of unions.

Mr. Ostroff argues that attacking public-sector unions means attacking government itself. He is correct. A big public sector ought to be attacked because it slows down economic growth and kills jobs. Europe, a heavily unionized continent, provides the best example of this. There, a burgeoning and unionized public sector has rendered the economy

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***7. Dose titration:* To ensure safe and effective use of CAVERJECT, you should be thoroughly instructed and trained in the self-injection technique by your health care provider before beginning treatment at home. The desirable dose should be established during an office visit, and should not be changed without first consulting your health care provider. The instructions for preparation and self-injection of the CAVERJECT solution should be carefully followed.**

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What is a typical dose of CAVERJECT? The correct dose of CAVERJECT for you must be determined by your health care provider during an office or clinic visit. Most men will use between 5 and 20 micrograms per dose; doses greater than 60 micrograms are not recommended. The dose of CAVERJECT that is selected for you during your office visit should not be changed without consulting your health care provider. If you accidentally inject an overdose of CAVERJECT, you should call your health care provider immediately.

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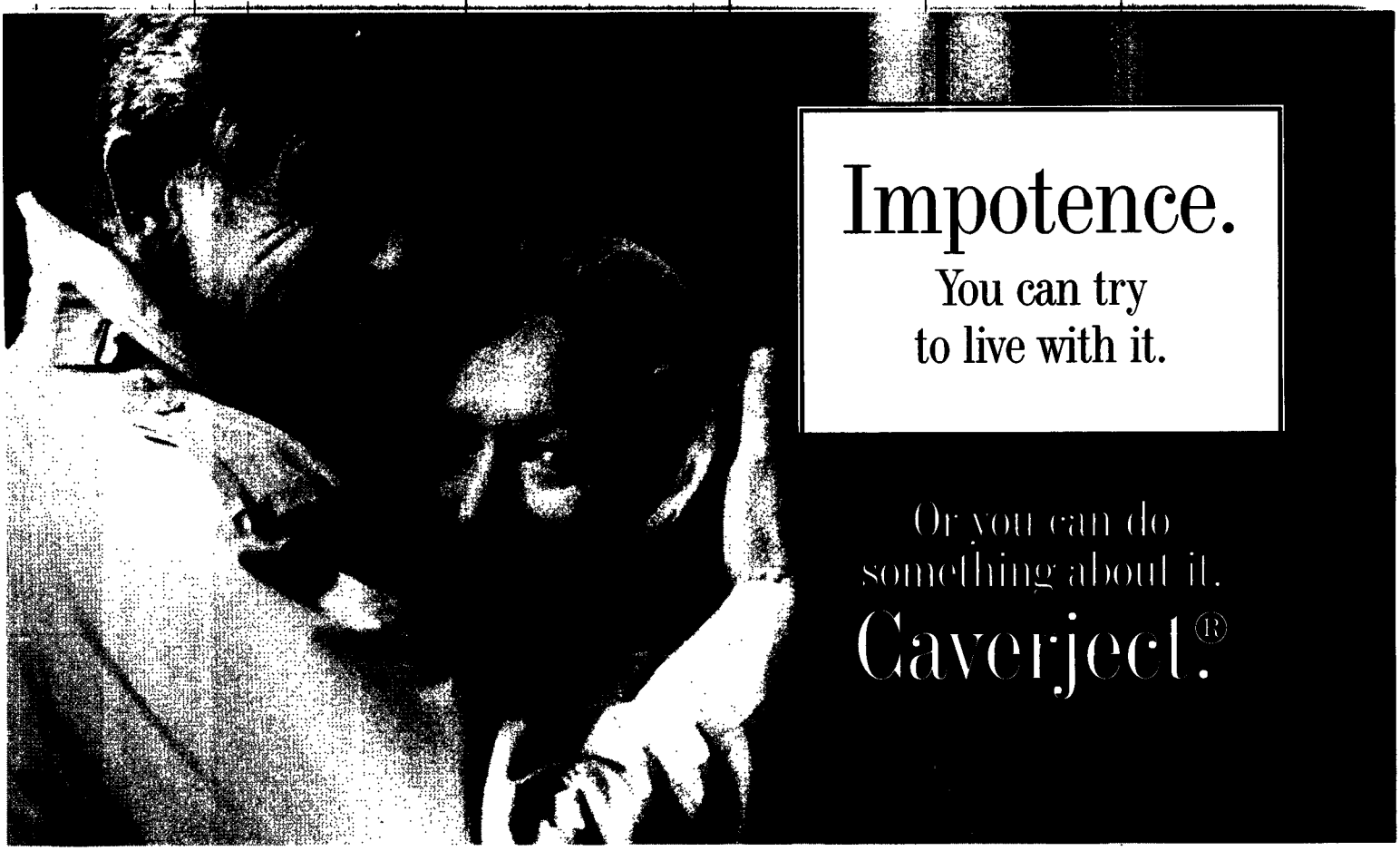

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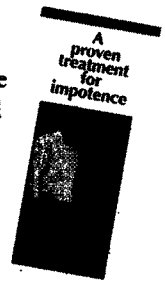

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close to sterile. So few net new private-sector jobs have been created there in the last generation that youth unemployment in some of these countries ranges up to 30 percent. In France, youth unemployment fosters the ugly hostility between the French and Algerian immigrants. For all their talk of inclusion and of helping minorities, unions in Western nations have too often supported the status quo, excluding the young, foreigners, and the underemployed.

Mr. Orlikow asks why my article did not address the campaign contributions of business in the 1996 election. The first answer is that the piece was not about campaign finance but about organized labor. The second is that there is a gulf of difference between, on the one hand, business contributions, or, for that matter, those of groups such as the Christian Coalition and, on the other hand, spending by labor. Whatever one says of corporations or the Christian Coalition, they are spending funds that have been given to them voluntarily. The unions, on the other hand, spend millions in money from unwilling and sometimes even unwitting workers. Lately, my own newspaper, the *Wall Street Journal*, reported one such example: the Washington Education Association illegally concocted what its own lobbyist admitted was an "internal ploy" to collect funds from members for PAC spending. The union broke the law by imposing a compulsory "community-outreach" donation on its members.

Mr. Orlikow argues that foreign children suffer in sweatshops when we export our textile jobs. The question is, compared to what? Conditions in Thai and Sri Lankan factories may indeed be worse than those in businesses that employ Canadians or Americans. But third-world children report to Western correspondents that their earnings in these sweatshops are better than their parents' and better than the average per-capita wage in their own villages. For us to force these children and their families to forgo real improvement in their lives merely in order to maintain our own pretense that the whole world must live at North American standards is self-righteous, even narcissistic. That more American firms do not acknowledge this is a measure of their cowardice.

Ilya Ehrenburg

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to take exception to Gary Saul Morson's dismissal of Ilya Ehrenburg's participation in *The Black Book* project, an anthology of first-hand accounts of the Holocaust on Soviet territory. In his review of my book, *Tangled Loyalties: The Life and Times of Ilya Ehrenburg* [Books in Review, September 1996], Mr. Morson asserts that Ehrenburg's "job was to guide the volume into print," as if he were only lending his prestige to the project and was not genuinely engaged in creating it. Contrary to Mr. Morson's unfounded and misleading claim, the historical record is crystal-clear: while the Nazis still controlled a great deal of Soviet territory, Ehrenburg assembled and directed the research of more than two dozen Jewish and non-Jewish writers, conducted scores of interviews on his own, edited a great deal of material, and contended with Soviet bureaucrats before relinquishing editorial duties to Vasily Grossman. Ehrenburg used the cover of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee to organize this project. That he was able to accomplish as much as he did independently of official Soviet control was unprecedented in Soviet history up to that time.

Mr. Morson also missed a major flaw in the book by John and Carol Garrard, *The Bones of Berdichev: The Life and Fate of Vasily Grossman*, which he also reviewed. In their attempt to create a monument to Grossman, the Garrards commit a crucial lapse of scholarly judgment. In February 1953, in the weeks following the denunciation in *Pravda* of a group of Jewish doctors for the alleged poisoning of Soviet leaders, Grossman was urged to sign an ugly collective letter addressed to Stalin himself. The regime was forcing Jewish cultural figures to agree in the letter that the doctors were guilty and that Soviet Jews should be deported to Siberia and Birobidzhan to save them from the "wrath of the people."

Terrified, Grossman signed the letter. (I interviewed the poet Margarita Aliger, who had sat next to Grossman when they both signed the letter.) Grossman was under tremendous pressure, and I do not bring this up to condemn him in any way. He then returned home to drink himself into a stupor.

Although the Doctors' Plot ended with Stalin's death before the deportations could take place, Grossman regretted signing the letter for the rest of his life. (In fact, the episode drove him, in part, to write his famous novel, *Life and Fate*, as a form of penance.) The Garrards refer to this episode only in a footnote, by comparing the letter Grossman actually signed with a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* denying human-rights abuses in the Soviet Union that Grossman's fictional counterpart, Viktor Shtrum, signs in *Life and Fate*. It is deliberately misleading on their part to make this comparison, aside from the fact that Grossman's failure of nerve needs to be fully discussed in any serious account of his life.

Ehrenburg was one of the few who refused to sign this letter to Stalin. He actually refused on three separate occasions and was the only person to write a letter of his own to Stalin arguing against the planned deportations. Alexander Yakovlev (Gorbachev's former adviser) has seen this letter in official Russian archives and confirmed that Stalin's markings are on it. Yakovlev has yet to divulge what, if anything concrete, Stalin noted. But the fact that Ehrenburg risked his life in this way and could well have spared two million fellow Jews from an act of genocide is not to be lightly dismissed. The episode highlights a chapter in *Tangled Loyalties*.

JOSHUA RUBENSTEIN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

GARY SAUL MORSON writes:

Joshua Rubenstein's quarrel seems to be more with the Garrards than with me. Even the passage in my review to which he objects represents my paraphrase of the Garrards' account, not my own view of the subject. Apart from the two books

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Winter 1996/97

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under review, I have no information worth mentioning on the creation of *The Black Book*.

The tone of Mr. Rubenstein's letter resembles that of his book: in both, he seems to conceive his role as one of defense attorney for Ilya Ehrenburg. Although biographers frequently are led to identify with their subjects, and to apologize for them as much as possible, such a practice diminishes the value of their work. It may seem naive to say so, but a scholar's highest loyalty should be not to his subject but to the truth. In this respect, not just Ehrenburg's, but also Mr. Rubenstein's, loyalties are "tangled."

At almost every point in his biography, Mr. Rubenstein strains to present Ehrenburg's behavior in the best possible light. Concerning Ehrenburg's fierce pro-Soviet propaganda in the 1930's, Mr. Rubenstein appeals to our anti-fascist sentiments to justify all those with misgivings about Stalin who nevertheless served him: "the consolidation of fascist regimes . . . *compelled* them . . . to remain silent about events in the Soviet Union" (emphasis added). But at the time, nothing the fascist regimes had then done remotely compared with Stalin's crimes, such as the enforced mass starvation of some seven million peasants. We are implicitly asked to justify Ehrenburg in terms of what the Nazis later did, which he could not have known in advance.

"Compelled" is also an odd word to use considering the fact that in the Soviet Union people were every day truly "compelled" in a nonmetaphoric way—in labor camps or by threats of being sent to them, as people were by the millions (or tens of millions). "Compelled," which suggests no choice, is the word of an apologist, and Mr. Rubenstein uses it elsewhere. Ehrenburg, he says, "was devoted to the anti-fascist cause and was also a Soviet journalist, two commitments that *compelled* him to compromise both the truth and his own conscience. . . . Ehrenburg, *like everyone* caught in the Stalinist net, understood the price of defying Soviet policies and adjusted his behavior to remain alive" (emphasis added). Like everyone? No, there were exceptions. Compelled by his status as a Soviet journalist? But not every journalist took on such sensitive and politically loaded duties as Ehrenburg did, and very few profited from them the way he did. At the height of Stalin's purges and later, when mere contact with foreigners was often enough to earn one a trip to the gulag, Ehrenburg lived splendidly and was able to travel frequently abroad. In 1960, for example, he managed to cross the border thirteen times.

Once a reader recognizes that a biographer is partisan, he cannot help wondering what has been left out; after all, defense attorneys do not usually present information damaging to their clients unless it is unavoidable. Our faith in such a biography necessarily weakens. Consider the following facts that Mr. Rubenstein provides: in the revolutionary and civil-war days, Ehrenburg was a fiercely anti-Bolshevik journalist. Having written for conservative papers abroad, he called the Bolsheviks rapists, both literally and figuratively, said that their regime was alien to the spirit of Russia, insulted Lenin personally, and sought support from the Whites, despite their well-known anti-Semitism. As Mr. Rubenstein notes:

> It is hard to find a similar example of such outright hatred of the Bolsheviks by any other important Soviet personality, let alone by someone who later flourished as Ehrenburg did.

Yet later, living abroad, Ehrenberg was given the sensitive assignment of reporting on the Spanish Civil War. And then he went on to become the country's leading foreign propagandist. How was this possible? How was he able repeatedly to solicit Stalin's direct protection when attacked? Anyone familiar with Soviet history will ask whether he was a secret agent as well as a propagandist. For that matter, why did Stalin not suspect him of being a double agent?

Yet I do not wish to reverse Mr. Rubenstein's questionable apologies with an equally questionable blanket condemnation. As I stated in my review, it is very hard to know whether to condemn people who compromised with a totalitarian regime that threatened their (and their families') lives. A host of questions present themselves: Did the person compromise more than he had to? Did he profit by his activities? What alternatives were available and which did others choose? And one always wants to ask oneself, would I have behaved any better?

How to judge those who collaborated with great evil, but under great pressure, is an immensely complex moral problem, one which every East European country faces today. In the case of a figure like Ilya Ehrenburg we need real discussion, a biography that weighs with sensitivity the difficult questions involved. What we get instead in *Tangled Loyalties* is the best case a defense attorney knows how to make. And that is itself troubling, from both a scholarly and a moral perspective.

Nancy LaMott

TO THE EDITOR:

Readers of my essay, "Mourning Nancy LaMott" [May 1996], may wish to know that *What's Good About Goodbye?* (Midder Music MMCD006), an album of previously unissued recorded performances by Nancy LaMott, has just been released. This album is available in many large record stores, and can also be ordered directly from Midder Music, 275 West 96th St., Suite 32-G, New York, NY 10025, or by calling (212) 663-3656.

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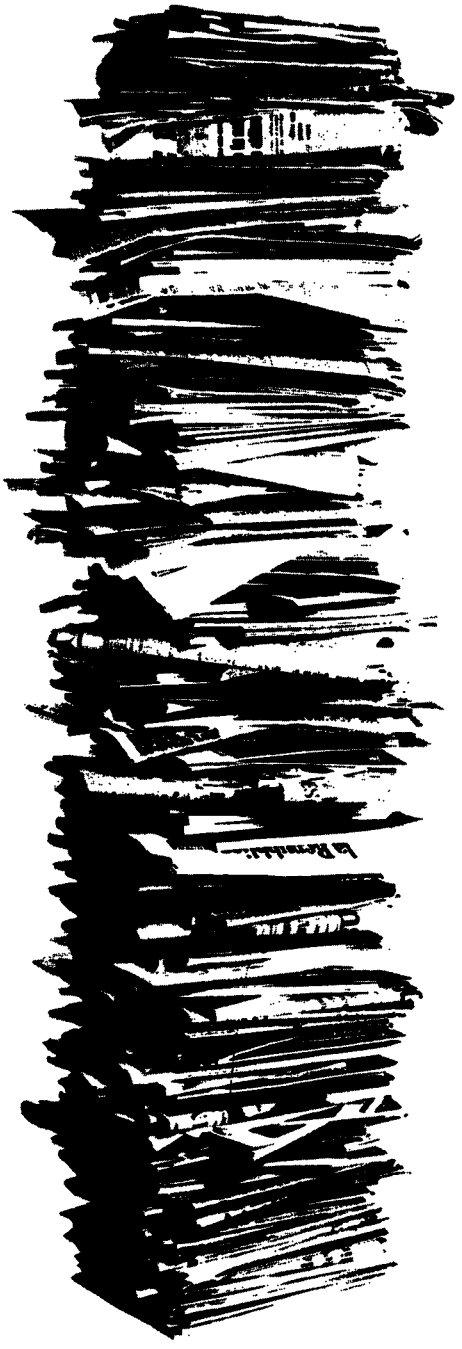

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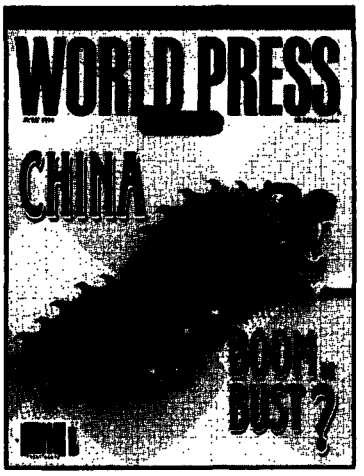

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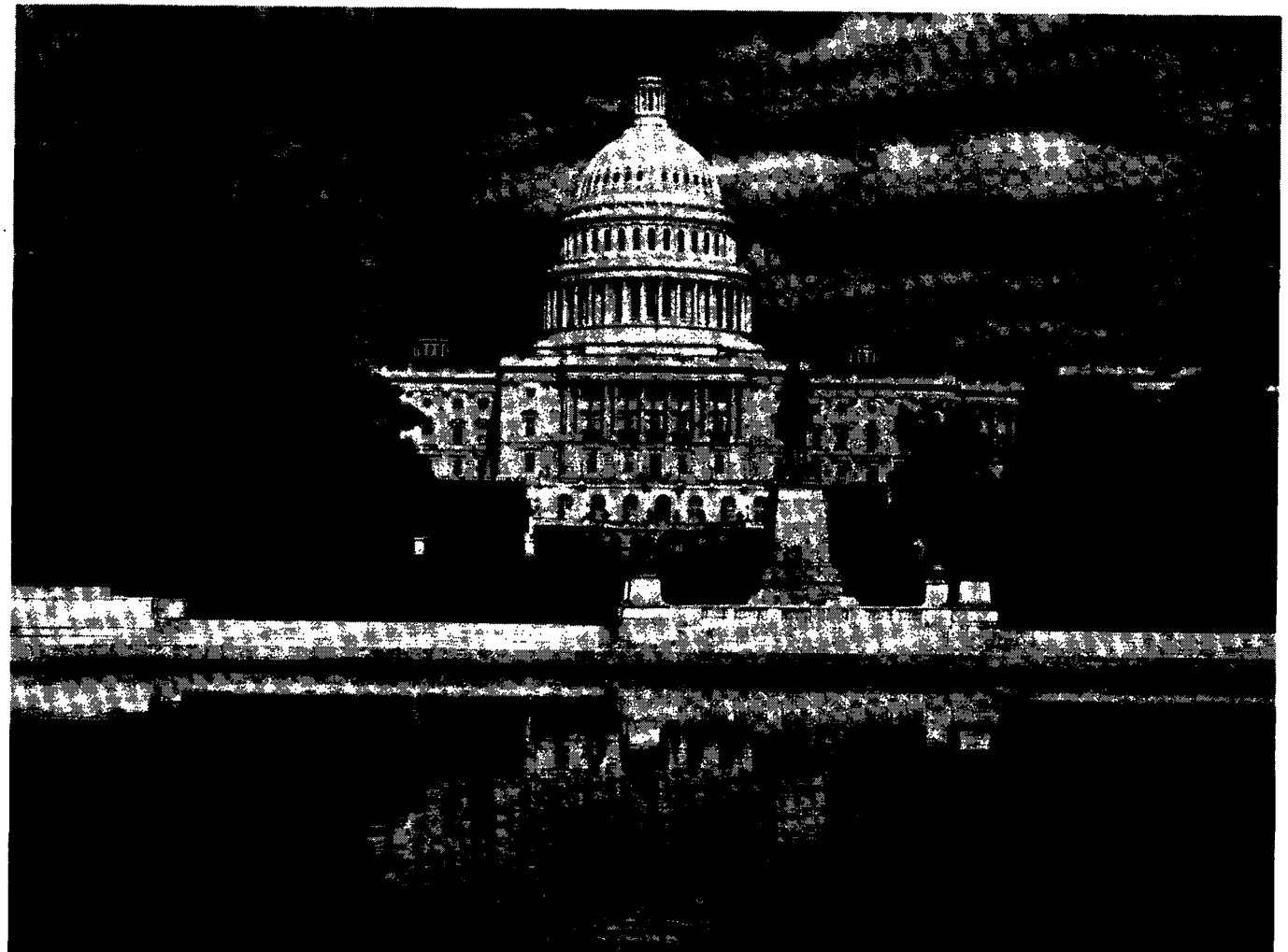

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Commentary
January 1997

A Farewell to Feminism

Elizabeth Powers

She was intelligent and generous; it was a fine free nature; but what was she going to do with herself? This question was irregular, for with most women one had no occasion to ask it. . . . Isabel's originality was that she gave one an impression of having intentions of her own.
—HENRY JAMES, *Portrait of a Lady*

MY COMING of age in the early 1970's was inextricably linked with what is variously known as feminism, the women's movement, women's liberation. It is a link by which I am much puzzled and troubled. The passing years have brought me a closer look at, so to speak, the fine print, and I shiver now when I observe the evolution that some of my closest friends from that era have undergone, spouting phrases about comparable worth and voicing the most fantastic bureaucratic visions of the future.

But in truth, if I go back to the sources—say, to a *Time* essay by Gloria Steinem in August 1970—I can see that the writing was already on the wall. Steinem, for one, had fully evolved as of that date:

> The [feminist] revolution would not take away the option of being a housewife. A woman who prefers to be her husband's housekeeper and/or hostess would receive a percentage of his pay determined by the domestic-relations courts.

Did I talk like that, advocating state control of private life, with (as Steinem went on) "free nurseries, school lunches, family cafeterias built into every housing complex"? Did I ever stand up in front of people, like the cadres of Red Guards in China, and, parroting the words of Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics* (1970), demand "a permissive single standard of sexual freedom . . . uncorrupted by the crass and exploitative economic bases of traditional sexual alliances"?

As a matter of fact, I do not believe I ever said such things or even contemplated them; nor, I suspect, did most of the women who considered themselves followers of the movement. A dissertation is probably being written which will offer a demographic breakdown of leaders and followers, but my own suspicion is that the leaders were girls whose mothers had been college-educated but became full-time housewives, and so were putatively victimized by what Betty Friedan had defined as the "feminine mystique." The followers, those with backgrounds similar to mine, were not so solidly middle-class or goal-oriented, and had not yet grasped they might be leaders of anything.

We daughters of the working class or the slippery lower reaches of the middle class aspired, by and large, to a greater degree of participation in

ELIZABETH POWERS *teaches humanities at the Manhattan School of Music in New York. She is the author of two novels and co-editor of a forthcoming collection,* Pilgrim Souls: An Anthology of Spiritual Autobiography.

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life outside the home. The shape that participation would take was uncertain. Though a number of highly motivated girls of my generation took advantage of opportunities to enter professional schools, the general affluence of the period allowed those of us who were less motivated or who came from less privileged backgrounds to engage in a lot of shopping around. In my own case, participation did not mean anything practical or even lucrative but rather "fulfillment," a realization of myself in literary and intellectual realms. It was my fortune, as Henry James wrote of Isabel Archer, to care for knowledge that was unfamiliar.

Throughout high school—I grew up in a rather cloistered environment in Kentucky—my aspirations seemed to run in thoroughly conventional directions: I wanted to be a cheerleader and prom queen and, of course, I wanted a boyfriend. But the same thing that kept me from becoming a cheerleader or prom queen also meant I was essentially dateless. I simply did not possess that combination of attributes which, for a brief time, confers unexpected grace on otherwise undeserving teenage girls. When I went to college, in 1965, still desiring to be exceptional in some way, I quickly perceived other possibilities of achievement.

This was a moment when university standards were still sacrosanct and an Ivy League institution was not the only place at which to receive a first-rate education. Though a fair number of women prominent today in public life probably graduated from women's colleges, I suspect the majority went, as I did, to schools like Indiana University (Jane Pauley, my classmate!). It was hard going for me—I was terribly uneducated when I got to college—but for the first time in my life I began to train my mind and came close to perfecting myself in something, namely, a foreign language.

Yet this youthful accomplishment, immeasurably assisted by two years of work and study in Europe, was attended by new challenges, chiefly of a social and sexual nature. Europe produced in me the same feeling that assailed Christopher Newman, the central character of Henry James's novel *The American*, in the presence of Old Master paintings: a vague self-mistrust. Possessing a fair share of Newman's innate American confidence and naturalness, but not his steady moral compass, I found myself entranced by the relaxed cultural habits that had evolved in Europe by the late 1960's. These I could not help contrasting with mid-century America's moral certitudes, centering on sex and the cold war, which now seemed to me to be a caricature of inflexibility.

Not three years before, where I came from, sex had been a matter cloaked in a great deal of mystery. I had been much fascinated by a girl I knew only by sight who became pregnant at fifteen and was married, probably shotgun-style, to her boyfriend of seventeen. Without being able to articulate it, I felt she must have been marked by her experience in a way that ordinary mortals, hewing to the straight and narrow, were not. Transgression may have resulted in shame and social denigration, but through her risk she had become an object of interest. Still, to stand outside the moral order was a fearsome prospect.

My Catholic attitudes were shot through with the fire and brimstone of other American cultural remnants—the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. In an educated European of the late 1960's, such attitudes provoked only condescending smiles. Europeans, it seemed, got to have the experience minus the soul-scorching. I was ignorant in those days of the social arrangements, mainly an intensive welfare bureaucracy, that cushioned these permissive sentiments and perhaps had even helped bring them into being. Instead, in the presence of mores so different from my own, and influenced as well by superior church architecture and other evidence of cultural tradition, I came to conclude that European attitudes in the matter of sex were wiser than those of Americans. I wanted to be wise like Europeans.

II

"I told you just now I'm very fond of knowledge," Isabel answered.

"Yes, of happy knowledge—of pleasant knowledge. But you haven't suffered, and you're not made to suffer. I hope you'll never see the ghost!". . .

"I don't think that's a fault," she answered. "It's not absolutely necessary to suffer; we were not made for that."

THE BIRTH-CONTROL pill, available in Europe in the 1950's, was first approved by the FDA in 1960; the last state ban on contraception was struck down by the Supreme Court in 1965. The pill would seem to have solved the problem for which, historically, the movement for women's emancipation had struggled: freedom from constant reproduction.

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Yet the pill was one of those technical achievements, like gunpowder and printing, like the desk-top computer, the effects of which flowed all over the social and political landscape. One of its effects was to alter a perilously achieved historical understanding regarding the responsibility of men to their offspring. With the pill, this responsibility was taken from them overnight. It was at this point, in 1969, returning from Europe, that I entered graduate school at the University of Texas. One of the first things I did after getting an apartment, registering for classes, and picking up my paycheck as a teaching assistant was to go to a doctor and get a prescription—even though I was still a virgin. That knowledge of which Isabel Archer spoke, which could be obtained without difficulty, had suddenly offered itself: all one had to do was take a pill 21 days in a row.

To get at some of the larger confusions engendered by this new dispensation it may be helpful to turn to a prominent book of the early women's movement, Ingrid Bengis's *Combat in the Erogenous Zone* (1972). I wonder if anyone has actually gotten to the end of this exercise in rage and self-pity; despite Bengis's avowed admiration for artists, it seems never to have occurred to *her* to shape her material or give form to her experiences. The book is instead hardly more than an accumulation of horrors, an inventory of the infallible tendency of the nicest-seeming males to take advantage of Ingrid Bengis. The gallery of villains ranges from construction workers whistling at her on the street to the boy she shared a room with who fondled her as she lay blissfully zonked out in her sleeping bag, to the Mexican restaurant owner who gave her a free meal and then demanded sex, to the truck driver who picked her up while hitchhiking and then got upset when she refused to put out.

These were experiences many of us had in the 1970's. In hindsight, the source of Bengis's rage, a rage felt by so many women of our generation, can be discerned as early as the second page of her book, where she speaks of the men (plural) she has loved. The long and the short of it is that, thanks to the pill, young American females of the 1970's were suddenly behaving with the license, but without the sensibility, of jaded aristocrats. We women instinctively knew that what we were conferring was important and had something to do with love, and, like Ingrid Bengis, we used that word when we spoke of sex. Yet the terms of the bargain between men and women had radically changed. The old bargain—sex in exchange for commitment—had issued out of conditions of what might crassly be called a balance of supply and demand. These conditions were undermined in the 1970's by the flooding of the market with casual sex.

Feminists tend to blame men for their cavalier treatment of women, but, in the realm which Goethe spoke of as *Sittlichkeit* (roughly, morals), men follow the lead of women. Young males, it turns out, will only be protective and caring of females if something is at stake. When women sleep with men they barely know, assuming on their own the responsibility for regulating reproduction, men will be equally casual. A reward not having been fought for or truly earned is not a reward for which any individual will feel more than momentary indebtedness.

No wonder the whistle of construction workers, once a sign of appreciation for rewards not yet earned, and perhaps unattainable, came to sound to us like a hiss of contempt at our availability. The resulting sense of bafflement can be gleaned from where, in her prose, Bengis stamps her foot in emphasis, and where her inimitable ellipses fall:

> *Of course* I was proud to be a woman . . . proud as well of a subtle kind of sexuality. But I was not proud of the way in which that sexuality was systematically abused in the service of something that ultimately cheapened both me and it.

By such displacements outward did rage at men become the fate of an entire generation.

The role of the women's movement was to turn this rage into something powerful—sisterhood. As unexpected as it may sound, the experience of becoming a feminist was, for many, akin to a sudden spiritual conversion, a radical turnaround of the kind Tolstoy described in *Confession*, in which "everything that was on the right hand of the journey is now on the left." An essay by Jane O'Reilly, "Click! The Housewife's Moment of Truth" (from the whimsically entitled *The Girl I Left Behind*, 1980), perfectly captures the quality of transformation promised by the movement, and just as perfectly exposes its hollowness.

The essay inhabits a genre the publishing market has long catered to: morality tales in which adolescents learn the deceptiveness of appearances through painful lessons that lead them to maturity and true values. Just so, Jane O'Reilly finally grew up when she encountered women's liberation. Her book is a tale of setting aside the

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unimportant things, the very things she had once (in the 1950's) perceived that being a woman meant: debutante balls, identification bracelets, popularity, 75 people singing carols on Christmas Eve, drinking cocoa out of Dresden cups, real pearls. The illumination she underwent was to recognize that all these were a snare and a delusion, a cover and a preparation for deferring and submitting to men. Instead, what women needed was to become "equal members of the human society."

O'Reilly's essay contains Erma Bombeck-like hints for negotiating the transition from Cinderella-*cum*-domestic-drone to liberated human being: "(1) Decide what housework needs to be done. Then cut the list in half." In the realm of love, her language is up-to-date, *circa* 1980: "I practiced and practiced taking the sexual initiative"; "I need to get laid." But the subtext is still the same old thing: romance. It turns out Jane O'Reilly truly wanted the flowers, the passionate declarations, and all the rest. For her, too, though perhaps less grimly than for Ingrid Bengis, women's sexual liberation was a bust. The new social arrangements—here is an entry for February 29 from the *Liberated Woman's Appointment Calendar*: "Leap Year Day. Propose to the Person of Your Choice"—failed.

At the end, Jane O'Reilly gives up, though she puts a brave face on it: "I now think love is somehow beside the point." Having sloughed off the demands of boyfriends, husbands, children, parents, in-laws, she is left to craft her own "lifestyle" out of the limp slogans of sisterhood:

> Nontradition has become tradition. My friends are my family, and we will provide for each other. Gathered about the [Christmas] tree will be the intact family from upstairs, the broken family from across the park, an extended family from out of town, my own reconstituted family, and the various inexplicable attachments we have all acquired along the way.

Thus, by 1980, had Kate Millett's turgid and off-putting rhetoric of revolution been refashioned into O'Reilly-style sentimentality. Moreover, this sentimentality had become a staple, peddled in magazines and books, in TV programs and movies. Seldom was it asked whether or how it could actually carry you through long-term illness, financial jeopardy, or personal crises of a truly acute nature. Instead, as many women went through affair after affair, as they failed with one Mr. Right after another, as they approached forty and saw the possibilities of a family of their own diminishing, as they found themselves living alone, scrambling for an invitation for Christmas dinner, O'Reilly's defeated alternative became more and more a necessary article of faith.

III

> *"Do you know where you're drifting?" Henrietta pursued [with Isabel], holding out her bonnet delicately.*
>
> *"No, I haven't the least idea, and I find it very pleasant not to know. A swift carriage, of a dark night, rattling with four horses over roads that one can't see—that's my idea of happiness."*

PEOPLE WHO look at my *curriculum vitae* often come up with comments like, "What an interesting life you've led!" By 1988, for instance, when I returned to graduate school to finish my Ph.D., I had lived in Tokyo for several years, working, variously, as a writer of advertising, editor of a travel magazine, and bar girl, with side trips for extended periods to such exotic locales as Bali and Chiang-mai.

My decision in 1974 to take a job in Tokyo was no doubt influenced by my love of things unfamiliar, though the choice was also determined by an impulse today's self-help primers discourage as "geographical escape." Having had so many boyfriends (or been in love with so many, as Ingrid Bengis would have it), I suffered from an intensely unsettled personal life. By this point, I had become diverted from the studious habits of my undergraduate years. With a different perspective on life, so I thought, and perhaps a Japanese boyfriend as well, things would fall into place.

If Henry James's Americans are disabused in their encounters with Europe, so my own love of the unfamiliar was much shaken by Tokyo. As I quickly discovered, not only would I not get to live in a picturesque wooden Japanese house, I was also not going to find a Japanese boyfriend. Japan in 1974 was profoundly conservative, and sexual emancipation was definitely not the order of the day. What was more, Japan must have been the only culture in the world where it was deemed unmanly for a man to display interest in a woman. Overnight I seemed to become invisible.

Within a few days, I felt I had struck a very bad bargain, but I was too stubborn to go back to the U.S. Thrown on my own resources, without multitudinous opportunities for diversion, I finally

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got down to writing. At first, the pages of my notebooks were filled with little more than Ingrid Bengis-like rantings against the Japanese. Soon, however, I began to write for third- and fourth-rate travel magazines, which in turn led to more substantial opportunities.

It was with a slender stock of writing credentials that I returned in the early 1980's to the U.S., where it soon became clear to me there would be a price to pay for my waywardness. In the few years I had been gone, things in America had changed, and I found I had gotten off the track. In my usual confident way I decided to support myself as a freelance writer and to publish a novel, a task at which I succeeded. But after my first novel a somewhat bleak period followed, as I adhered to my desire to distinguish myself by writing stories and novels that nevertheless went unpublished. I used to meet weekly with a group of writers, all of whom had been published in the field of genre fiction, but they quickly grew impatient with me, giving me little encouragement in my determination to write what they all considered too literary and rightly scorned as unmarketable.

It was about this time, the mid-1980's, that I conceded that the promise of participation and distinction was going to take a long time to realize (I was nothing if not stubborn!). Such a clear-eyed assessment did not result in my entering the job market, however. Instead, in 1988, with my 1970's-based confidence still intact, I returned to graduate school. That I happily contemplated the prospect of teaching at a small liberal-arts college at a time when there was already a glut of Ph.D.'s seems another delusion that only an American woman who came of age in the 1970's could entertain.

IV

> *Smile not, however, I venture to repeat, at this simple young woman from Albany who debated whether she should accept an English peer before he had offered himself and who was disposed to believe that on the whole she could do better. She was a person of great good faith, and if there was a great deal of folly in her wisdom those who judge her severely may have the satisfaction of finding that, later, she became consistently wise only at the cost of an amount of folly which will constitute almost a direct appeal to charity.*

The women's movement is usually seen as having grown from the movement for civil rights for blacks, and, to many people, it had to do primarily with equality of economic opportunity. From the late 1960's on, mainstream journalists dutifully trotted out the statistics concerning women's economic and professional disadvantages. Yet feminists agitating about the pay scales of lawyers or accountants were in fact after something else: a change in the very meaning of equality.

For women to be "equal," as Jane O'Reilly dimly perceived ("The point of feminism is not that the world should be the same, but that it should be different"), something more drastic than admission to medical school was required. Female biology itself would have to be interpreted as a humanly limiting condition, established not by nature but by a cabal otherwise known as the patriarchy. There was much at stake, and a 1969 article in the *Nation* spelled it out: the women's movement, intoned the writer, was dedicated "to a total restructuring of society, . . . and is not content simply to integrate women into male-defined goals and values."

This thoroughgoing radicalism, a (relatively) new aspect of the century-old movement for female emancipation, elicited criticism even on the Left. Among the opponents was the socialist and literary critic Irving Howe. In December 1970 Howe published in *Harper's* a long review-essay of Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, which a few months earlier had been baptized by *Time* magazine as the *Communist Manifesto* of the women's movement. Howe took the book sharply to task not only for its intellectual and literary failings but also for what he perceived as Millett's dangerous political agenda, which he considered "a parody of the Marxist vision of class struggle." In one of the nastiest literary put-downs of all time, he declared that "the emotions of women toward children don't exactly form an overwhelming preoccupation in *Sexual Politics*: there are times when one feels the book was written by a female impersonator." This was a comment, I recall, that particularly exercised me and my sisters in the movement at the time. That I had not read Millett was beside the point; it was enough that Howe attacked the woman who articulated our rage for us.

Were sexual differences amenable to the kind of social reconfiguration Millett was advocating? Howe, for one, certainly did not think so. To the contrary, he thought they should not be jettisoned on the trash heap of history in the pursuit of some bloodless ideal. In speaking of the struggles of his own parents, toiling as garment work-

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ers while raising children in wretched poverty, Howe sounded almost like a conservative. Besides suggesting that the differences between the sexes might in fact contribute to the melioration of our fallen human condition, he also defended the family as being not necessarily oppressive to women:

> That the family . . . has been coextensive with human culture itself and may therefore be supposed to have certain powers of endurance and to yield certain profound satisfactions to human beings other than merely satisfying the dominating impulses of the "master group," hardly causes Miss Millett to skip a phrase. Nor does the thought that in at least some of its aspects the family has protected the interests of women as against those of men.

In retrospect, this may have been the moment when the Left gave way definitively to the New Left. That Howe was fighting a rear-guard action is clear from the fact that he soon withdrew from this polemical field—as did Norman Mailer, another leftist stalwart whose lone contribution to the anti-feminist canon was his 1971 *The Prisoner of Sex*. By now, moreover, both the women's movement and the New Left had begun to find a new source of legitimation in a philosophy that had sunk roots in the universities. Call it deconstruction, call it post-structuralism, its intent was to demolish the notion that there could be anything like cultural standards, or agreed-upon truths, or, it went without saying, objective sexual differences.

Today, of course, this relativism-in-the-service-of-a-new-absolutism has contaminated far more than the upper reaches of academia and the fringes of the Modern Language Association. All introductory college courses, be they in literature, sociology, anthropology, religion, etc., have become shot through with the insights of deconstruction, and an afternoon of watching Oprah is enough to demonstrate how they have filtered down into the general culture. The goal of this new orientation is, ostensibly, radical human freedom and equality, without ties to oppressive institutions of any kind, especially not to the patriarchy, that shibboleth of social reconstructionists. But what deconstruction has really done is to banish, as nothing more than a set of arbitrary conventions, the moral promptings that lead people to notice oppression in the first place, and along with them the ability to distinguish true oppression from false.

V

He had told her, the first evening she ever spent at Gardencourt, that if she should live to suffer enough she might some day see the ghost with which the old house was duly provided. She apparently had fulfilled the necessary condition; for the next morning, in the cold, faint dawn, she knew that a spirit was standing by her bed.

THERE IS a cart-before-the-horse quality about feminism. An explosion of economic forces, starting after World War II, sent women into the workplace in large numbers. It was only after this process was in high gear, and when women began directly competing with men in the upper echelons, that feminism came into being. An ideology then arose to justify the unprecedented autonomy on the part of women (and perhaps to assuage some of their felt guilt over the abandonment of hearth and home) and to allocate spoils. A panoply of institutions formed in its turn, to buttress the ideology: women's-studies departments in universities, tax-exempt institutions setting themselves up as lobbyists for "women's issues," a larger and larger government bureaucracy. By now, many women have come to believe that their opportunities stem wholly from the struggles of their feminist forebears and not at all from the steady expansion of the market.

But ideology, as Karl Marx noted long ago, is replete with tensions. These tensions are in abundant evidence in an essay by Diane Johnson in a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books*. Johnson is aware of the distress signals being sent out by contemporary feminism, and she demonstrates that even a liberal like herself can recognize the ridiculousness of academic feminist highjinks:

> . . . endless testimonials, diatribes, and spurious science from people who imagine that their personal experience, the dynamics of their particular family, sexual taste, childhood trauma, and personal inclination constitute universals.

Johnson even circles back to the incommensurables of human existence, going so far as to refer to God and original sin. Since she is a novelist, such incommensurables may be on her mind.

Yet on the subject of women and women's issues, she inevitably begins from premises that are at odds with the way individuals struggle to craft their individual solutions to life's demands, a task that, ironically enough, the novel has traditionally taken it as its prerogative to illuminate. John-

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son's constant use of the word "class" in connection with women alerts the reader to the nonnovelistic sources of her thinking. Her enumeration of the minimal rights that feminists should urge on everyone is unalloyed bureaucratic boilerplate: personal safety, autonomy in sexual and health matters, equal pay for equal work.

Among my friends who are working women of middle age, there are very few who do not consider themselves feminists. Their attitudes, like Johnson's, are permeated by a belief in the inevitable progress of humanity—from which, they hold, women, prior to the 1960's, were excluded. They remain upbeat concerning the bureaucratic arrangements that will bring about the inevitable progress. Such has been the infiltration of feminist-think that women who 30 years ago would have recoiled from the social engineering extolled by Gloria Steinem now accept the rationale for suspending a six-year-old boy from school for sexual harassment because he has kissed a six-year-old girl.

Johnson herself adduces several sociological studies which purportedly demonstrate that all the parameters are finally lining up and settling into place. She quotes Dr. Daniel J. ("mid-life crisis") Levinson: "Humanity is now in the early phases of a transformation in the meanings of gender and the place of women and men in every society." The same doctor also holds, from the loftiest Archimedean perspective, that such gender transformation (here I am quoting Johnson) "is an irreversible historical trend which will take another century to achieve." And people think Newt Gingrich is a crackpot for spouting Alvin Toffler.

Johnson declines to question whether the "transformation in the meanings of gender" projected by Levinson is a desirable state, whether it is a state any of us would wish to morph into. An irreversible trend, after all, is an irreversible trend. But she compliments France and Scandinavia, "whose governments have committed themselves to large-scale child-care arrangements." These arrangements, like the model farms the Soviets used to allow foreign visitors to see, seem to offer evidence that rational social planning will work and that the awful dislocations and disruptions occurring all around us are only temporary and in any case justified by the march of History.

But maybe Dr. Levinson is on to something. It strikes me that one of the peculiar results of the reign of feminism is that women have actually become unimportant, indeed nonessential. This has come about by feminism's making radically suspect the influence that women, *qua* women, have traditionally exercised on the souls of those with whom they come into contact. The first effective thrust was to deny that any of the endless tasks performed by women within the marriage union contributed in any way to its spiritual wholeness. Housekeeping and child-raising were transformed into a purely material operation, consisting of the kind of mindless, mechanical steps that characterize the assembly of an automobile or a computer. It is no surprise that the most ambitious women of my generation fled this scenario of drudgery, and, by extension, also avoided traditional women's occupations as they would the plague. A generation of women who would have been excellent teachers instead became attorneys, in what they were told and seemed to believe would be a net gain for humanity.

This abandonment of the female realm has also led to the production of a class that appears to be in the vanguard of the nanny state: women who "have it all," whose marriages are not so much unions as partnerships of two career paths, and whose children, once assembled and produced, are willingly turned over by them to caretakers. Most of these women have probably not dwelt on the consequences of the Faustian bargain they have struck, but their example says loudly and clearly that children are interchangeable units and that the values they learn can be equally well acquired from a Norwegian au pair and after-school public television as from parents.

Whether such women really do have it all is for them, perhaps, to say. Even so, there remains a lack of synchronicity between the highest levels of feminist achievers and ordinary women. Housework and the raising of children, denigrated by the movement and by so many elite women, is looked upon very differently by my unmarried friends, even those who call themselves feminists. They sense that the struggle to form one's life in conjunction with another—including all those horrible minutiae of daily existence that Jane O'Reilly described as the murder of a woman's soul—is a spiritual enterprise of the highest sort, involving the "discovery," as Midge Decter put it with her habitual precision in *The New Chastity* (1972), "that to be in charge of oneself also requires the courage to recognize the extent of one's frailty and dependence on others." And they sense acutely that, in declining or refusing to

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make those compromises of daily living-with-another, they have missed out on the greatest of human challenges and have indeed failed in point of courage. They still yearn to meet someone with whom, as the current parlance goes, they can share their life.

The tragic part is the egocentrism of their current existence, the days and years devoted to self-maintenance, with minimal effect on the lives of others. Women now get to fulfill themselves—O'Reilly's passionate wish—but they do so in the most resolute solitude. If there is any validity to what Aristotle said long ago—that one's existence has a goal toward which the soul strives—then the care of one's physical and mental self can only be a subordinate part of a larger existential plan. The women I am talking about do not have such a plan, be it marriage or children or a high-powered career. Instead of caring for the direction of their souls, they tend to their "personal space."

The greatest loss for my friends who have not married is of course the children they never had. Exhortations to self-fulfillment aside, by the time they reached forty many women of my generation were in a desperate race with their bodies. Magazines in the late 1980's began featuring articles on "Mommie Oldest," as women underwent Herculean efforts to get their aging uteruses into shape. *In vitro* fertilization, artificial insemination, hormone shots—if only they could go back and undo all those abortions!

HERE, INDEED, is the great unnameable, the subject that many of us have refused to face squarely in its terrible personal dimension but that, like the purloined letter, has always been there, before our eyes. Childbirth, contraception, abortion: these dividers of women also illuminate the terrible contradictions of feminist ideology, and particularly the contention that women are no different from men.

The divide between the goals of radical, society-transforming feminism and ordinary women is inadvertently captured by Diane Johnson in her criticism of the social thinker Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, whose latest book, *Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life*, dwells precisely on this divide. Fox-Genovese, she writes, "stops just short of saying that feminists will murder infants in their cradles." Even setting partial-birth abortions aside, Johnson's refusal to see what feminism has, in fact, done in this realm is breathtaking. And because she will not acknowledge it, she must also censure Fox-Genovese for speaking of women's sexual decisions as being somehow fraught with special danger. To speak in this way, says Johnson, suggests that women are not up to "independent moral choice." But Fox-Genovese does not deny women moral choice; she merely underscores what most women have always known: that sex, for them, *is* fraught with special danger. Ingrid Bengis knew that, though it made her very angry.

I have made my way back to my starting point. Is sex merely a material manifestation, a physical fact and act, a discharge of physical tension? Does it make any difference that the man who caresses a woman's body is a man she met only a few hours before? Or is a woman's experience of sex part of a larger moral, indeed spiritual, equation? Does she require that the man with whom she shares her bed be one whose love has settled unwaveringly and discriminatingly on her? Does she expect him to take responsibility for the child she may conceive? These are the hard questions, ones that many of us have not confronted. But whenever a woman does confront them, and arrives at the latter point of view, you will probably find that she has severed her ties with feminism.

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Why the Republicans Lost, and Won

Joshua Muravchik

WHAT WAS it that made the Republicans such hapless contenders in last November's race for the presidency?

One short answer is: peace and prosperity. In 1996, the combined rate of unemployment and inflation was as low as it has been in 30 years. Fifty-five percent of the voters interviewed in exit polls on November 5 estimated the general state of the economy as good or excellent, and these people went heavily for Clinton, as did those who said their own personal financial situation had improved. As for peace, Clinton's two biggest international gambles, Haiti and Bosnia, had paid off, allowing him a plausible claim of success with virtually no American casualties. Nowhere in the world were Americans dying under enemy fire.

Under such benign economic and international circumstances, said the conservative commentator Fred Barnes, "President Clinton's defeat of Bob Dole [was] inevitable." But was it? Throughout much of 1995, when the economy was no less robust, and the nation no less at peace, Dole had *led* Clinton in the polls. And notwithstanding the favorable circumstances of 1996, Clinton retained important areas of vulnerability, especially on the "character issue." On election day, when asked if they believed "Bill Clinton is honest and trustworthy," 54 percent of voters said no; asked how a Clinton victory would make them feel, 52 percent replied either "concerned" or "scared." Exit polls also revealed that nearly half of those who voted for Clinton did so with reservations.

If peace and prosperity did not defeat Bob Dole, there is another short answer to hand: the manifest shortcomings of the Republican candidate himself. In the words of the columnist Charles Krauthammer, "But for Dole (and Kemp), it was winnable."

Without a doubt, Bob Dole had personal shortcomings aplenty. And it was also true, as a *New York Times* analysis noted, that Dole's "third run for the presidency was plagued by missteps, indecision, and strategic blunders so fundamental that they bordered on amateurish." Yet were Dole's undeniably mediocre rhetorical skills worse than those of other contemporary presidential candidates—George Bush, for instance, or Jimmy Carter, or Richard Nixon, or even Lyndon Johnson? Losing campaigns, moreover, almost always look poorly organized, for the simple reason that *most* campaigns are poorly organized, what with so much to be done in so short a time by teams of people who hardly know one another. Besides, whatever the weaknesses of Dole and his staff, he did win the Republican nomination, and he won it by beating all the other declared aspirants. However poor a campaigner he may have been, he was better than they.

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In the end, whatever weight one attributes to the favorable economic and international circumstances that benefited Clinton, or to the deficiencies of Dole and his campaign, no presidential race can ever be adequately accounted for without reference to those things that lie at the heart of politics: issues and ideologies. As in past elections, November's exit polls showed again that ideology is a more reliable predictor of voting behavior than economic circumstances. Even those reporting an improved financial situation were less likely to vote for Clinton than those calling themselves liberal; conversely, even those whose situation had deteriorated were less likely to vote for Dole than those identifying themselves as conservative.

The ideological key to the 1996 presidential election was twofold. First, Clinton as President had moved sharply to the Center. To be sure, there may have been more appearance than reality in this. The Clinton campaign claimed, for example, that the President had increased defense spending "three times in three years," when in reality he had slashed spending by $127 billion in his first year and then grudgingly restored small bits under strong pressure. "He is of course a shocking liar," wrote Michael Kelly, the newly installed editor of the *New Republic*, adding, "Fourteen of the accomplishments of which Clinton bragged in his acceptance speech at the Democratic convention were actually GOP measures."

BUT TO say that there was more appearance than reality in Clinton's behavior is not to say that there was no reality. Here, a bit of history is in order. In 1992, Clinton had won a large plurality of self-identified "moderate" voters by campaigning as a centrist or "new kind of Democrat." But no sooner had he won than he executed a shift to the Left, ordering that his administration be staffed according to rigid rules of racial and gender preferences and proposing steep defense cuts, a new government jobs program for college students, a lifting of the ban on homosexuals in the military, tax hikes, and above all a convoluted program of national health insurance that would have assimilated a further 13 percent of the U.S. economy to the federal government.

When all this resulted in the great Republican triumph of 1994, Clinton turned around again in one of the most amazing political makeovers in memory. His about-face began with the 1995 State of the Union address in which he proclaimed a "middle-class bill of rights." Banal as that may sound, it was a departure from liberal Democratic orthodoxy, as expressed canonically by Mario Cuomo in his famous address to the Democratic convention of 1984 when he described America as "a tale of two cities," one rich and one poor, "the lucky and the left out, the royalty and the rabble."

A year later, in his 1996 State of the Union speech, Clinton made a still sharper break with Democratic orthodoxy by declaring that "the era of big government is over." By then he had rehired his old strategist, Dick Morris, who helped hone the tactic of "triangulation": positioning Clinton midway between the Republicans and the Democrats in Congress. Soon the President was abandoning earlier budget proposals that had assumed deficits of hundreds of billions of dollars and was embracing first the principle of a balanced budget and then the Republican deadline for it of the year 2002.

The most remarkable of Clinton's moves focused not on the economy but on an area long ceded to conservatives: social issues, or, as they are now more often called, "values" or "family-values" issues. This is the area in which George Bush had clobbered Michael Dukakis in 1988, and Clinton absorbed the lesson. In 1995-96, he set about making these issues his own, speaking up for school uniforms, V-chips, and restrictions on teen smoking; signing the welfare-reform bill (which aimed to stem the tide of illegitimacy) and the defense-of-marriage act (which denied automatic legal recognition to homosexual wedlock); proposing an extension of the family-leave act for new parents; and above all taking a hard line on law and order.

Politically, law-and-order was perhaps the most powerful of all the social issues, and also the one that had long been the virtually exclusive property of the Republican party. Clinton's "initial strike" on this front, reported *Time* magazine in its blow-by-blow post-election account of the campaign,

> was a series of crime ads to be aired seventeen months before the election. . . . "The idea," as [one aide] said, "was, 'This is not the guy you think you know.'"

Throughout the campaign, Clinton boasted incessantly that he had put 100,000 new policemen on the beat (his Justice Department confessed that the actual number was 17,000), and in the end he won the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police. By October 1996, a small plurality

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of voters said they preferred the Democrats to the Republicans on the issue of crime.

All in all, Clinton's transformation, striking in its audacity, was even more striking in its success. By the time his makeover was complete, Fred Barnes was writing that Clinton had "become in many ways a more conservative president than Ronald Reagan"; on the other side, the liberal apparatchik Richard N. Goodwin was lamenting in the *New York Times* that "the venerable principles of the [Democratic] party . . . have been abandoned." True, Clinton paid a price for his maneuver in the coin of credibility. Not only did a majority of voters doubt his honesty, but when asked whether they expected Clinton would "stay in the political Center" after the election or would "move in a more liberal direction," they were nearly evenly divided. But still they reelected him. In November, moderates, who constitute a little under half of the electorate, favored Clinton over Dole by 57 percent to 33 percent, by far the most uneven division in the two decades for which we have such data.

WHY WAS the moderate vote so lopsided? To explain that, we need to look at the second side of the ideological story of this election, which is that while Clinton was claiming the Center, the Republicans were disdaining it.

Upon assuming the role of Speaker of the House in 1994, following the historic GOP victory that he had helped to engineer, Newt Gingrich declared: "I am a genuine revolutionary. [Democrats] are genuine reactionaries. We are going to change the world." Later, Gingrich would wax bitter at Democrats who called him an extremist; but it was he who had used the term revolutionary, and in America, revolutionaries are extremists.

The congressional Republicans, who had been swept to power on a wave of popular reaction against the Clintons' health-care proposal, were guilty of overinterpreting their mandate. True, the voters had rejected any contemplated enlargement of the welfare state; but to oppose government expansion, or even to believe that the government was already too large, is not the same thing as welcoming drastic cutbacks, or being anti-government. Americans are especially loath to contemplate reductions in the one area in which government has grown the most drastically: namely, the so-called entitlements of Social Security, Medicare, and the like. (An exception is welfare, which most voters are ready to see reduced, but it is a relatively small federal program.) This is a reality Clinton would exploit against the Republicans, at first haltingly and then mercilessly.

Though they succeeded in passing much of their "Contract with America," the congressional Republicans soon found themselves deadlocked with the administration over the budget. Convinced that the voters shared their anti-government passions, they hit upon the tactic of forcing a shutdown until Clinton came to terms. But their actions were soon revealed to be highly unpopular. By the time the GOP threw in the towel, Clinton's approval ratings were registering a marked improvement.

The Republicans' anti-government zeal got them into trouble again over federal law enforcement. In the controversies over the deadly raid against the armed compound of the Branch Davidian religious cult at Waco, Texas, and the shoot-out between FBI agents and white supremacists at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, GOP legislators managed to convey the unfortunate impression that they believed the real villains of the story were the federal officials involved. This had further reverberations when, as federal indictments charge, two or three individuals associated with the so-called militia movement commemorated the Waco tragedy by bombing the federal building in Oklahoma City in April 1995. Clinton seized the opportunity to project himself as a pillar of national unity and lawfulness, and opinion polls recorded an immediate spike in his public approval.

But Oklahoma City and Ruby Ridge did more than give Clinton an opportunity to act "presidential." They also signaled that the Right had supplanted the Left as the home of radical misfits and violent extremists. Of course, the militia groups were no more Republican than the Weathermen had been Democratic, but in each case a faint penumbra of shame was cast across one side of the political spectrum. It deepened in this case when certain Republican figures like Pat Robertson and Patrick J. Buchanan echoed the ravings of the radical Right in their own warnings against the "new world order."

Nor did it help that Republican legislators blocked Clinton's proposed anti-terrorism measures on the grounds that enhanced powers of surveillance by the authorities would endanger civil liberties. By striking this constraining stance toward federal law enforcement, the GOP continued the process of squandering some of its

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most valuable political capital—its standing as the party of law and order. That waste had already begun in 1993 and 1994 when, under the impetus of the gun lobby, Republican legislators in both houses opposed the ban on assault weapons by margins of more than three to one, almost the exact inverse of the position taken by the electorate. Thus did Republican leaders help pave the way for Clinton's capture of the crime issue.

NOR WAS crime the only "values" issue the Republicans flubbed. On several others they failed to exploit weaknesses in the Democrats' position while magnifying their own. Since, for example, an important bloc of Republican constituents is not just opposed to abortion but sees it as murder, the party is bound to take a strong stand on the matter, even if doing so is an electoral liability. But Dole might well have elicited the sympathy of a majority by seizing on Clinton's veto of the congressional ban on partial-birth abortions, a procedure repugnant even to many Americans who believe that abortion should be legal. Instead, after the Republican convention beat back a small compromise with the party's pro-choice minority, the campaign shied away from abortion altogether.

Another such issue was education. The Republicans' advantage here was their support for school choice, a popular idea. But Dole got off-track in his acceptance speech when he chose to attack teachers' unions. The attack seemed gratuitous, and anyway fell flat: most people think teachers' unions have a positive influence on education.

Then there was affirmative action. The November victory of the California Civil Rights Initiative, which passed by 54 to 46 percent, suggests that this issue could have helped the Republicans. Opponents of the California measure, which outlaws racial preferences, accused its supporters of racism; in truth, however, the case against affirmative action rests solidly on the great "dream" of Martin Luther King, Jr. that Americans be judged by "the content of their character" and not "the color of their skin." Yet not only did the Republicans fail to argue compellingly for a return to these first principles, they made things harder for themselves by taking a harsh approach to immigrants and thus lending plausibility to the charge that they were motivated by bigotry rather than by a devotion to equal rights.

True, once Clinton decided to compete for the values issues, the Republicans were hard put to match him program for program. Not only is Republican philosophy skeptical of government programs in general, but this is an area particularly ill-suited to government-engendered solutions. That, however, makes simple acts of moral advocacy and example all the more important. Nancy Reagan's "Just-Say-No" initiative, Dan Quayle's critique of Murphy Brown, William J. Bennett's crusade against violence and obscenity in popular culture have demonstrated how public figures can use their platforms effectively for moral purposes. Possibly the best moment of Bob Dole's own campaign was his May 1995 polemic against the glorification of "mindless violence and loveless sex" in Hollywood movies. But this was virtually a one-shot effort. Dole's failure to stress such themes during the next year and a half remains a great mystery.

COULD THE Republicans have recouped some of the ground lost on the values issues by reasserting their well-earned stance as the paragons of national security? Perhaps. Although foreign policy was of little interest to voters in this election, Clinton provided an opening by his hollow response to Saddam Hussein's thrust into Iraqi Kurdistan.* But instead of castigating Clinton for his fecklessness, Jack Kemp inexplicably said that Clinton should have tried "diplomacy first," and Dole bizarrely called for more consultation with the UN.

Finally, Dole compromised his effectiveness, and also squandered his advantage on the "character issue," by his decision to push for a $550-billion tax cut. Ever since 1995, when the House Republicans insisted on pursuing a (much smaller) across-the-board cut, the Democrats and their allies in organized labor had been claiming that this was a "tax cut for the rich," to be financed out of Republican-demanded "cuts" in Medicare. This was demagogic: the Democrats knew that the Republicans were proposing only to cut Medicare's rate of growth, and that this was inevitable under any circumstances. Still, the attack bit, because a large proportion of the tax benefits would have gone to the better-off and because the federal budget is all one pot: the size of cuts in Medicare or other programs is indeed affected by a reduction in tax revenues. And the attack was given added force by Dole's announcement in

* For a discussion of this episode, see "What Saddam Hussein Learned from Bill Clinton" by Harvey Sicherman in last month's issue.

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July of a much more sweeping cut. Now, just as the Democrats had long been seen as pandering to special interests, the Republicans were seen as pandering wholesale.

Dole expressed frustration late in the race that voters would chose someone like Clinton over someone like himself: "Where's the outrage?" One answer was given by the economist Herb Stein, a Dole supporter, in July:

> The voters know that his advisers are urging Mr. Dole to recommend a big tax cut because they are desperate about the election, not because it represents his policies and principles. Can Mr. Dole afford to be seen doing that? The biggest thing he has going for him against Mr. Clinton is that voters think he sticks by his beliefs, that he tries to do the right thing even though it's hard. Should he sacrifice that public estimation of him now?

When Dole took to claiming that he was more trustworthy, he sounded (as John Podhoretz pointed out in the *Weekly Standard*) merely egotistical. To demonstrate true superiority of character, he might have talked turkey to the American people about the national debt and the mismatch between taxes and entitlements. He might have spoken of the need for shared sacrifice before the aging of the baby-boom generation makes our problems all the more dire. At the very least this would have made for an arresting contrast with Bill Clinton's smooth bromides. Perhaps the electorate would not have wanted to hear painful truths, but polls did show that voters were more keen for deficit reduction than for tax cuts. By October, however, between Dole's tax proposal and Clinton's adoption of Gingrich's deadline for a balanced budget, the Republican advantage as the party most trusted to reduce the deficit had shrunk from a 21-percent margin in mid-1995 to a mere 3 percent.

IN SUM, the Republican party came across less as conservative than as right-wing, thus creating the impression that the Center was up for grabs. And the Center was precisely where Bill Clinton was strenuously, and effectively, positioning himself.

Still, that too is far from the whole story of the 1996 elections, and may be even less than half of it. For the Center of American politics has itself shifted rightward in recent years. Moreover, Clinton victory or no Clinton victory, so far it shows no signs of shifting back. Exhibit A for this are the November election returns for the House and Senate. There, the Republicans confirmed that in some underlying sense, they have become the majority American party.

Even their vulnerabilities confirm this fact. It is because the majority party sets the agenda that the opposition party can fall back on counterpunching—which in politics, as in boxing, is often a winning tactic. Nixon, Reagan, and Bush won presidential elections largely by making an issue of Democratic foibles, and Bill Clinton won in 1996 largely by doing the same to the Republicans. But what a single candidate can do at the presidential level is very hard to replicate in mass at the congressional level.

Although the Republican majority in the new Congress is narrow, there are reasons to think that it will endure. Two years from now, in 1998, the GOP will enjoy the advantage that traditionally accrues in off-year elections to the party not in the White House, an advantage especially strong during a President's second term. In addition, there is not likely soon to be another election in which the prospects for the Democrats will be as favorable as they were in 1996.

In recent decades, congressional incumbents have won reelection more than 90 percent of the time. An insurgent's best chance is against an incumbent who has served only one term and is not yet a fixture in the eyes of voters and donors. Thanks to their epochal victory in 1994, the Republicans had a whopping 70 freshmen Representatives in that vulnerable position last November. Naturally, these were the races especially targeted by Democratic funders and organized labor. But in the end, 59 of the 70 survived.

Democratic candidates last year had another advantage that will not come around again, namely, Bill Clinton's substantial margin over Bob Dole; during the last weeks of the race, Clinton was comfortable enough in his lead to campaign in Republican strongholds and help boost the rest of the Democratic ticket. The Democrats also had the benefit of the unhappy performance of the Republican-led Congress of 1995 and 1996, a performance highlighted by the two shutdowns of the federal government. "If the GOP can keep control after [such] monumental stupidity," the columnist Ben Wattenberg wrote, "their base is strong." Clearly, it is.

There are also demographic reasons for believing that Republican dominance is fairly secure, at least in the near term: the class composition of the American electorate has evolved from mainly

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blue-collar to increasingly college-educated and white-collar, a source of growing strength for Republicans. And finally, the electorate also continues to tilt ideologically toward conservatism. Several public-opinion surveys suggest that a plurality of voters, though unhappy with specific policies, favor the long-term direction signaled by the Republicans and, no less significantly, fear that a Democratic-controlled Congress would be too liberal. In November exit polls, 33 percent of voters described themselves as conservatives, as against only 20 percent who said they were liberals. Asked whether government "should do more to solve problems" or "is doing too many things better left to business and private individuals," a majority, 52 to 41 percent, said that government was doing too much.

THE BIG question remains what will become of the Democratic party. If, after Clinton, the Democrats revert to the Left-liberalism that has characterized their politics for a quarter-century, then the Republicans will continue to benefit from a wide margin of safety. There are signs that this may happen, in particular in the newly assertive role being played by organized labor. With the forced retirement of Lane Kirkland as president of the AFL-CIO and his replacement by John Sweeney, who recently enrolled in the Democratic Socialists of America, the unions have taken a dramatic turn. Having once fought to keep the Democratic party in the Center, labor will now be tugging it to the Left, just as the trade unions tug the Labor party in Britain. The advantage can only redound to the Republicans.

On the other hand, novice Democratic candidates for Congress this year mostly imitated Clinton, and others in the party may be spurred by his successful example. ("We're all New Democrats now," said House minority leader Richard Gephardt.) If the party should indeed remake itself in Clinton's 1996 centrist image, then the Republicans will face a more serious challenge. It is, however, a challenge they can meet—not by presenting themselves as right-wingers, harsh on social issues, reckless on budgetary issues, and isolationist or opportunist on international issues, but instead by competing forcefully for the Center that is theirs to define. This does not mean abandoning conservatism; quite the contrary, it means consolidating it.

Decades ago, Irving Kristol branded the GOP the "stupid party" for restricting itself to promises to clean up after the messes made by Democratic profligacy, and failing to articulate an alternative political vision. Today, there are signs that the American electorate, after a long era of self-indulgence, hungers for such a vision, whose essence is a return to responsibility, moral no less than fiscal (and, one hopes, international as well). That is the basis for a mature conservatism, and the party that becomes its vehicle will probably assure its dominance in the post-Clinton era.

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Don Juan Zimmerman

A Story

Joseph Epstein

In his terry-cloth robe, over his morning coffee, Donny Zimmerman read the *Chicago Jewish Chronicle*. Sometimes it contained an item about guys he had gone to high school with. Norm Lippman, who owned a coast-to-coast chain of sporting-goods stores, was a big figure in the United Jewish Appeal. Ronnie Saltzman had made a killing in real estate, and every so often a story would surface about his being a possible buyer of the Chicago Bears. Dave Gordon, who at first went into his father's glazing business, then made a fortune selling glass insurance, was a partner in the Bulls and White Sox with Jerry Reinsdorf. A guy named Friedkin, three years older than Donny, had directed the movie *The French Connection*, and the other day Donny read that this Friedkin was claiming to be five years younger than he was. What a world, he thought, even the successful were four-flushers!

He turned to the back page with the personals ads, guys looking for broads, broads, for guys. He read the "Women Seeking Men" section with a practiced eye.

> Wanted: one special, professional, caring gentleman, over 50, to be a special friend to this attractive, full-figured Jewish female professional. Seeking a person to relate to the emotions one experiences during this time of life.

"Full-figured" was one giveaway; those "specials" and that "caring," another.

> Friends first! Seeking a divorced/widowed Jewish man, 35-60, of good character, for divorced, young-looking, sincere Jewish female, two children. I'm moral, stable, attractive, disease-free. Seek honesty, open communication. Prefer non-smoker.

Donny, who enjoyed a good cigar from time to time, poured himself another half-cup of coffee, composing in his mind his own never-to-be-sent ad for the *Chronicle*:

> Man in middle fifties, balding, not in very good shape, fairly well-to-do, not previously married and probably unmarriageable. Seeks easy sex of an uncomplicated kind. (Offers of oral sex not refused.) No taste for open communication. Limited range of interests, art and culture not included. Poor dancer. Gastronomically unadventurous. Not comfortable with children. Values less important than looks.

That ought to draw a fine response. Donny lifted himself out of his chair, carrying his coffee into the bathroom to consider himself in the full-length mirror. The prospect, even he had to recognize, did not entice. At fifty-four, he was roughly twenty pounds overweight, his teeth were

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capped, his skin tended toward the blotchy, a lot of his hair was gone, and what was left of it was gray and frizzy. He wore glasses. He looked, in fact, much as his father had before his death at the age of sixty-four of a massive single-shot coronary. The old man was at his desk, going over some papers when, pow!, he just went down. Two years later, Donny's mother followed.

Donny had taken each of his own minor physical setbacks in something like reasonable stride—what the hell choice did he have?—though every once in a while he was amazed by their cumulative effect. In restaurants and bars, he preferred to avoid seats facing mirrors. Sometimes he would be walking down a street in the Loop, catch his reflection in a window, and fail to recognize that this slightly portly middle-aged man was, of all people, Donny Zimmerman.

If he weren't a bachelor maybe the question of physique wouldn't enter in. But the fact is that Donny was still in the hunt. He had been in it, if anyone was counting, for nearly forty years. He liked women. True, not enough to marry one, but he enjoyed their company, liked sleeping with them, liked their odd perspectives on the world, liked them to like him. When he didn't have a woman to take out to dinner, or for Sunday brunch, or for a weekend in Wisconsin, life seemed less pleasing. Yet, somehow, it could never be the same woman for long.

Donny: he still thought of himself by that boyhood name, and so did friends from high school he would run into on LaSalle Street. But the figure in the bathroom mirror didn't look like a Donny. It looked more like a guy named Louis or Morris or Irv or Sam, one of the men of his father's generation who used to come over to play pinochle. Would any of them have understood his life? He doubted it. His own father did nothing to hide his disappointment at his only child's failure to marry and provide him with grandchildren. "No woman good enough for you?" Sidney said on more than one occasion. When Donny protested that he wanted to play the field for a while, his father replied: "I got some news for you, kid—you're no Don Juan. Find the right girl and settle down. You'll save a lot of wear and tear all around."

Most of Donny's high-school friends had married, bang, right out of the gate: at twenty-three, twenty-seven at the latest. This was something he never quite understood. What was the hurry? Lots of lovely ladies out there—why harness yourself to only one? When his friends' marriages went down the tubes, Donny couldn't help feeling just a touch reconfirmed. Then there were the guys who, on their second or third marriages, had children in their late forties or early fifties. Why would a guy want to keep that kind of pressure on himself, especially when there was a good chance he wouldn't be around to see them out of school?

Yet women, Donny found, were still a big part of his thoughts, not to mention his conversation with his pals at the East Bank Club. He would go there after work—a successful if small-time lawyer, he did DWI cases, real-estate closings, minor personal injury, the occasional easy divorce—slip into a Fila running suit, maybe shoot 20 free throws, try 25 or so sit-ups, 10 or so minutes on the treadmill, take a *schvitz*, 20 minutes in the Jacuzzi, then sit in the lounge, checking the action.

"MEN ARE not by nature monogamous," said Bert Silverstein authoritatively. He ought to know. Sixty-one and never married, Bert had a mistress of 30 years standing. But there was also a series of young Polish girls, newly arrived in Chicago, whom he had installed in apartments at the cost of roughly $1,500 a month each. He would drop in on them once or twice a week to get, as he put it, his pipes cleaned.

"Silverstein," Donny's high-school friend Lenny Friedman needled, "still cheating on your mistress, I hope?" Then, turning to Donny, "Bert here's my role model, you know."

Like his pals, Donny believed in the double standard, not so much in the justice as in the fact of it. Things were different for men and women. Donny once went out with a good-looking woman who had a limp. It turned him off. The same limp on a good-looking man might be thought distinguished. A man in his fifties—himself, for example—was still in the ball game, when all but the most extraordinary women of his age were not. This was merely the way things were set up—unfairly, but there it was.

Why should a woman want to sleep with him? He was, after all, no beauty; with the passing of the years, rather uncomfortably closer to the beast. "No romance without finance," Mel Rosen used to say, meaning that, for guys like them, if they were to have any measure of success with attractive younger women, they needed expensive cars (Donny drove a year-old blue Jaguar), good tickets for games and plays, the best tables, and, Donny felt, the appearance of urban mastery, of knowing their way around.

At the same time, a certain ruthlessness was re-

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quired. You had somehow to make plain that a bartering arrangement was in effect, in which niceness was traded for niceness. Yet how much longer could this game go on? More and more, young women seemed maybe a little too young, their fund of common knowledge smaller with each passing year. It felt odd to sleep with a woman and the next morning, over breakfast, discover that she had never heard of Mussolini or Claudette Colbert or Louis Armstrong.

Then there was the physical end of things. "The first time you can't do it twice is what is known as disappointment," his friend Lenny once announced at the East Bank coffee shop. "The second time you can't do it once is what is known as despair." Although he wasn't about to admit it, Donny was long used to disappointment and he was not entirely free of despair, either. Sometimes, climbing into bed with a thirty-two-year-old tootsie—who would never, by the way, have even heard of the word "tootsie"—he felt like some old player who couldn't really hit the fast ball any longer but was just putting in another year toward his pension.

Sometimes, too, feeling a little callow, he asked himself why he had never married. Maybe the problem was that he had grown up in the 1950's, and so the very illicitness of sex, then in such short supply, still excited him, the way certain men who lived through Prohibition could never get over the excitement of alcohol. But there were times he thought things went deeper—or at least back farther.

At Senn High School, Donny had never been at the center of things. He was an uninterested student and only a mediocre athlete; he didn't really run with the most admired kids. Socially, he was never on the first team—maybe not even on the second. What he most remembered about those years was a deep yearning. Donny's life with the girls of Senn, all those Jackies and Shelleys, those Sues and Nancys and Dianes, was restricted to thoughts, fantasies. His few attempts at dating were a fizzle. He drove off a few times with friends to the cathouses of Braidwood and Kankakee—the speakeasies of their Prohibition—but of club and fraternity dances, drive-in movies, dances at the Edgewater Beach Hotel and the Palmer House he knew little. Was he getting his own back now, making up for his lost youth?

ALL THIS came to him one late afternoon when, across the coffee shop at the East Bank, he saw two women seated at a table along the wall, one of whom he was almost certain was Bobby Goldman. He pictured her at Harry's, the store outside Senn where the Jewish kids used to gather in the morning, at lunch, and after school to socialize, smoke, flirt, joke around. He remembered the girls from Lake Shore Drive or from West Rogers Park, in their cashmere sweaters or club jackets, notebooks clutched to their bosoms. In late May or early June, they would wear white sleeveless blouses. Viewing from the side, one might make out a camisole, or the elastic of a bra strap. Donny could get pretty worked up by such oblique sightings of the promised land—though promised, in those days he knew all too well, not to him.

In the final semester of his senior year, Donny took a course in typing—someone had said it might come in handy if he went to college—and found himself seated next to Bobby Goldman. She was one of the most popular girls in the school, which was to say one of the most admired. Smallish, dark, slightly pudgy but in a way that to Donny seemed only sexy, Bobby Goldman wore either cashmere or Angora sweaters, usually under a blue and gold club jacket (the club was called the Chicitas). She went out with a guy named Mark Springer, a champion swimmer, backstroke and freestyle, who had his own car, a two-tone green-and-cream Chevy Bel Air, hardtop convertible, current year's model. Mark Springer's father was chief of surgery at Michael Reese, and the family lived on Lake Shore Drive. Bobby lived in West Rogers Park. Her father was in used auto parts, but in a big way.

The high point of Donny's school day that year was typing, which met, he remembered even now, during seventh period. He turned out to be a terrible typist, and he made lots of jokes to Bobby Goldman about his ineptitude with the klunky old Royal with no letters on its keys. She seemed to enjoy them all, flashing a smile that made him want to send her a thank-you note each time. Donny sensed a natural sweetness in her kind, generous response. He wanted to protect her, even though, as far as he could make out, she didn't in the least need his protection.

In those days Donny was able to imagine himself in wonderfully complicated sex play with various girls at Senn: in the back seats of cars, in their beds (never, for some reason, in his own), in Lake Michigan, on open fields and meadows (a fine pastoral touch, this, for a city kid). But with Bobby Goldman the only fantasy he could sustain was one of marriage. He imagined their living together; he

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imagined their children; he even imagined their dog (a wire-haired terrier named Bernie). Although he often thought about asking her out, invariably he lost his nerve. Had she refused, everything would have been spoiled. And why shouldn't she refuse? Once, getting up his nerve, he called her at home. Her mother answered, asked who it was, and Donny, trembling, his mouth gone dry, hung up. At the end of the semester he got a D in typing. Bobby, after graduation, went downstate to the University of Illinois.

Looking across the East Bank coffee shop, Donny was now absolutely certain it was she. Her face showed lines, at the corners of the eyes and a bit around the mouth, but she still had that fine, heart-stopping smile. Her hair was mostly dark with streaks of silver, frosting he thought it was called. She was wearing a velour running get-up. When the check came, he noted that she took half-glasses out of her purse to read it; with his bachelor's instinct, he also noted that she wore no wedding ring.

"HI," DONNY began awkwardly that evening when he finally tracked her down on the phone—she lived in Lincolnwood and her name was Mrs. Roberta Levinson. "Am I talking to the former Bobby Goldman?"

"Yes," she answered, a little warily.

"I hoped so. I'm not sure you'll remember me, but my name is Donald Zimmerman. We went to high school together. We sat next to each other in typing, senior year."

"Forgive me," she said, "but I'm not sure I do."

"It was a while ago," Donny offered. "But when I saw you in the East Bank Club today, I thought it was you, and I wondered if you'd like to meet for coffee or a drink or maybe dinner, you know, to talk about the good old days."

"They weren't too bad, were they?"

"The older I get the more I'm inclined to believe they were swell," said Donny.

The conversation picked up a decent flow, and they talked about the small but growing number of classmates who had died, mostly of cancer and heart attack. Donny learned that she had been twice married, once divorced, and was now a widow. They arranged to meet two nights later, for an early dinner.

Driving up from the city, Donny wondered if he hadn't made a bad choice. He had last been at Myron & Phil's steakhouse about two years ago, with Lenny Friedman. "This restaurant, which has been in business for more than 60 years, if you count its days on the old West Side," Lenny said, as he slathered chopped liver on black bread, "is probably responsible for the deaths of more Jews than Martin Bormann." What if Bobby were a health-food nut? Nor did you have to live on seaweed to find Myron & Phil's objectionable. Waiting for Bobby at the bar— he had arrived twenty minutes early out of nervousness—he thought the joint was especially thick with cigarette smoke. A feeling of passionate intensity, all directed to the serious activity of eating, dominated the room. Cutlery clattered against china; everyone was a little too tanned or a little too red, probably from high blood pressure. The scene before him, Donny felt, was red meat devouring red meat.

He saw her come in, stand by the table near the hostess's podium, look around. She wore taupe-colored trousers, brown suede shoes with low heels, a red polo shirt under a white cardigan. Clutching a brown suede purse, she seemed smallish, vulnerable, kindly—still the girl he had adored more than 35 years ago. He slipped off the bar stool and made his way over.

"Bobby Goldman," he said, holding out his hand, "Donny Zimmerman."

"Of course," she replied, "now I remember you."

"Well, I had more hair and less flesh. But you haven't really changed all that much."

"What did you say you do? Con man? Or is it used cars?"

"Really. You haven't changed all that much. You are beyond any question Bobby Goldman."

"Levinson, actually."

"Look, is this the wrong place? Should we go someplace else?"

"No, it's fine," she said. "I'll just spend my full year's cholesterol account on one meal. No big deal."

They were taken to a table near the back. To one side three men in thick colorful sweaters were at work on large strip steaks. To the other side an elaborately coiffed woman with hyperthyroid eyes held a rib bone aloft, making a point; her husband, a bald, heavyset man in peach-colored pants and a light-blue linen jacket was mournfully contemplating a devastated T-bone.

Bobby told him she still saw some of her old high-school friends. Jackie Weiner, Sue Shapiro, Lee Silverman, Judy Pollak—each name caused a little ping of nostalgic longing in Donny. Many of them had had tough lives: divorces, mastectomies, dead husbands. Other members of their class had died. Her old boyfriend Mark Springer had committed suicide; it turned out he was a clinical depressive, but in those days, she said, who ever

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heard of depression? When Donny volunteered that the only friend he still saw from high school was Lenny Friedman, Bobby said she didn't remember him. They had traveled in different circles in those days.

Then she gave him her own story. Her first marriage, to a man named Jerry Goodman, with whom she had a daughter, fell apart in the 60's. "He was a player, Jerry," she said, with slightly weary sadness. "If he could get into a woman's bed, he felt he shouldn't let the opportunity pass. It became an embarrassment. My father, who was still alive then, said it wasn't likely to get better, so I filed for divorce. I was thirty."

After the divorce, she had to go to work—Jerry was very irregular with his child-support payments, her father's business had suffered reverses. It was at the firm where she worked as a legal secretary that she met her second husband, Marty Levinson. He was twenty years older than she, divorced with children already grown. He had been very good to her, Marty—generous, a sport in the old-fashioned sense. When he died three years ago, he left her financially well taken care of. She still lived in his house.

As Bobby was recounting all this, Donny could not help hearing the voice of Bert Silverstein: "One of the benefits of younger women over older women is that they have shorter stories." But then Bobby told him about the death of her daughter Jenny.

"She was twenty-six, and she was killed in a car crash coming back from Ann Arbor, where she was a graduate student. It was less than a year ago. Jenny was not only my daughter, she was my dearest friend. We'd spent the eleven years between my marriages alone together. She's left a hole in my life that I don't expect will ever be filled."

Bobby looked down at her purse on the table. Donny, murmuring "I'm sorry," fell silent.

"I suppose no one gets off scot-free," she said, finally, looking up.

Except me, Donny realized at that moment; except me. The reason was that he had kept himself clear of entanglements. For an instant, he felt he had missed something—he wasn't quite sure what—essential.

When the attendant brought Bobby's Lexus around, Donny held the door for her.

"Would you like to do this again?" he asked, leaning in at the window.

"It would be nice," she said. "Please call."

His own car arrived as she drove off. He tipped the kid a fin, got in, and drove home wishing he were seventeen again and just returning from his first date with Bobby Goldman.

"Still good-looking?" Lenny asked the next day at the East Bank when Donny told him about the previous evening.

"I'd say so," Donny said. "And nice. I had a kind of crush on her in high school. "

"Didn't she used to go out with a swimmer, a guy named Singer maybe?"

"Springer. He committed suicide. A depressive, apparently."

"These days who isn't? People who aren't are either in chemotherapy or waiting for a bypass. Did you ever think growing old would be such goddamn fun?"

Lenny had his own aggravations. Lois, his wife, was discovered to have multiple sclerosis five years ago. It was just now starting to hit her pretty hard, and the doctors said she would eventually have to live in a wheelchair. Lenny, who had been cheating on her for years, had recently stopped—or so at least Donny supposed, from his silence on the matter.

"You going to see her again?"

"I think so," Donny said. "Sure. Why not?"

"What's the attraction?"

"You aren't going to believe this, but part of the attraction is that she hasn't had so easy a life. She had a first husband who screwed around on her. Another husband died. She lost a kid, a daughter, in a car accident."

"That makes her sexy?"

"It makes her interesting."

"You intend to do anything about it?"

"What's to do? I hope to see her again."

"Careful, Donny, up to now, you know, you've led a blameless life."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means that you've stayed in the chase but out of the wars."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning that when you get beyond screwing, life becomes stickier. I've always sort of admired your coolness in this line."

Donny remembered that the man he was talking to had a wife with multiple sclerosis. "Jesus, Lenny, I've been out with her once."

"If I were you, friend, I'd watch my step. In this field, land mines are everywhere."

ONE OF the *nice* things about being with an older woman, Donny thought, was that she knew the words to the same songs you did. Coming back from the men's room, he noticed

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Bobby faintly lipping the words to "Tenderly" along with the pianist in the bar-lounge of the Knickerbocker Hotel. But mainly he couldn't quite get over the fact that he was in the company of Bobby Goldman—that she was, in some sense, his girl, though "girl" might not be the most precise word.

Things had progressed even faster than he had hoped. He had taken Bobby out to brunch the Sunday following their first dinner together. The next week they went to a movie at the Wilmette Theater, saw something called *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*: a mistake, too sex-ridden, people humping away in what seemed like interminable slow motion. Sitting there, he found himself vaguely embarrassed. He snuck a look at her; she seemed to be watching the proceedings painlessly enough.

A week later, at Bobby's place in Lincolnwood, Donny was at first edgy, then astounded at where life had landed him. He lay in her queen-sized bed, on very good sheets, the antique quilt with geese on it pulled back, in his boxer shorts, waiting for her to emerge from the bathroom. He always felt this an odd moment, a moment of slight confusion when the hunter suddenly wonders whether he isn't after all the prey. He heard water running, jars opening, atomizers hissing. He didn't know what to expect, hoped to hold up his end, speculated on the need, at his age, to offer up a prayer for sexual performance.

It went well enough. No rockets on either side, or so Donny judged, but for him his mere presence in this bed was fireworks enough. He stayed the night. The next morning, in a light pink terry-cloth robe, she served him breakfast: coffee, orange juice, bagels with Scottish marmalade. Lovely light flooded her blue and white kitchen. Passing one of his tests, Bobby looked even better in the morning. She said he was the first man she had been with since her husband's death three years ago, and he decided—what the hell?—to believe her. He felt great.

Driving into the city on the Kennedy Expressway, Donny thought that if this had taken place 30-odd years ago, by now he would probably be the U.S. Senator for Illinois or sitting on the Supreme Court. The golden-oldie station was playing "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing," and in an off-key voice, very loud, he sang along, his head out the window of the Jaguar, until the driver of a city garbage truck behind him honked loudly to indicate he was out of his lane, passed him on the right, and gave him the finger. City life, thought Donny with a smile. Not half bad.

He was fifty-four. With luck he might get to eighty, which meant maybe he had twenty-five or so years left. Suddenly, living alone was beginning to seem bleak, a hardship. Chasing women after sixty was already pushing it; after seventy it would be obscene. He thought of Bobby in her nightgown, a prospect, he mused, he wouldn't mind waking up to in the years remaining.

But what did *she* want? He, all things considered, was rather a less lovely prospect to contemplate. She evidently didn't need his money; Levinson had probably left her with more than Donny could bring to the table. The only thing he had to offer, really, was himself, Donald Lawrence Zimmerman—a lumpish man of middle age who had earned his livelihood on the edge of the civil courts. That, plus a 30-years-delayed crush. Not much of a bargain.

"How is it you've never married?" she asked one night in the Cape Cod room of the Drake.

"I think it was because I valued—maybe overvalued—my freedom. I loved the idea of staying loose, traveling light, not being tied down. It's a masculine ideal, I suppose. Probably a dumb one."

"Didn't you ever want children?"

"This will make me sound cold, but I never really did. I looked around and saw all the people who seemed to make a botch of their kids, or who only wanted to get away from them when they were young, or couldn't wait to be free when they grew up."

"Having a child is the best thing I've done," Bobby answered. "Nothing else compares."

"I can see why you'd say that."

"It's also why losing my daughter is something I can't hope ever to get over. Not finally. Not really."

"Would you marry again?" Donny asked, nervously.

"It's too soon," she said. "I'd like to live with my loss a while longer. But let's get back to you. Ever been close?"

"Can't say as I have."

"Saving yourself for the senior prom?" she asked, smiling.

"I never went to ours."

"A big night. I went with poor dead Mark Springer."

"I wish you'd gone with me," Donny said, "but I'd never have had the nerve to ask you."

"You seem to have acquired the nerve now."

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"You've made it easy for me."

"Do you know that the women's magazines say that men like you are the worst of all possible risks."

"How so?"

"Men who've got beyond forty-five and never married. They're supposed to be fundamentally unserious about women. Even men who've divorced twice are a better bet. Widowers beat men like you hands down."

"I didn't know I was such a disaster."

"Sorry to bring you the news."

"Truth is you're bringing me lots," Donny said. "Being with you makes me think I've wasted a lot of time, like maybe three decades."

"Didn't you ever think of the future?"

"Not much beyond the weekend."

"I think about it all the time," she said, "and I don't want to ruin what's left of it. I envy you. You seem to feel no pressure."

"I've never had a grand plan. The future, I figure, will take care of itself."

FOUR DAYS later, Donny visited his internist for a follow-up on the physical he took every three years. Harry Berger made him feel that the future would take care not only of itself but of him, too. Harry was saying that he didn't like the feel of Donny's prostate, and a blood test showed that his PSA count, the main indicator of trouble, was unnaturally high, up around seventeen. He wanted him to see a urologist. He was going to order a biopsy.

Donny liked Harry Berger, a rabid Bulls fan, fiftyish, with none of the authoritative pomposity of most physicians. He used to tease him about being the youngest man in America named Harry. But now the doctor's seriousness as he talked about Donny's prostate was somehow the most alarming symptom of all. There would be other tests to take; there was the danger that the cancer—and cancer it looked to be—had spread to the bone or to other organs. All this they would know in the next few weeks. Even if it was cancer, Harry reassured him, that didn't mean he couldn't beat it.

Donny walked out of the Pittsfield Building in a daze. The sun brightened even dreary Wabash Avenue, with its El tracks and tired office buildings. It was Indian summer. A black guy, leaning against the Mallers Building, was playing "Mood Indigo," not very well, on a saxophone. Donny dropped a ten into his instrument case; maybe it would bring him luck. He was in no pain of any sort, except for shock and heartsickness. The world, through which he usually strode so easily, suddenly made almost no sense. He was not going to get off scot-free after all.

He took a cab to the East Bank, staring into the back of the Paki driver's neck. He would have traded lives with him, even-up. When he got to the Club, Lenny was sitting in the locker room schmoozing with Bert Silverstein, Mel Rosen, and a guy named Howie Harris, who 35 years ago had been a basketball star for Von Steuben High. They were talking about some hot stock tip, a company that sold telephones you could take into the shower. Donny signaled Lenny that he needed a word in private.

"What're you going to do, kid?" Lenny said, after Donny told him the news.

"What I'm going to do is everything I can to avoid checking out. I was counting on another couple of decades. I somehow hadn't imagined cancer; I thought maybe a heart attack, like my father."

"Snake eyes don't care who's holding the dice. Besides, lots of guys beat prostate cancer."

"Maybe so. I hope to God I'm one of them. I don't want it said that I lived by the sword and died by the sword."

"I'll do the jokes around here, buddy. Who else're you planning to tell?"

"There's no one else, except maybe Bobby. I guess I can't really not tell her."

When the biopsy proved positive, Donny decided he couldn't delay much longer. But he was in an odd position. He and Bobby had been together maybe twelve or fifteen times over the past five weeks. Their intimacy had grown. Did he love her? Who knew? He felt comfortable and at ease as he had around no other woman he had ever known. Did she reciprocate the feeling, whatever it was? He didn't know that, either. What he did know is that Bobby owed him nothing, and that she had already seen enough of desertion and death. He put it off a while longer.

AT WEISS MEMORIAL, a youngish urologist named Stuart Kalinsky told Donny that he would have to schedule a CAT scan, an MRI, and a bone scan. After that, unless the cancer had spread, there would be the question of whether to fight it with hormone therapy, or radiation, or chemotherapy, or surgery. But all this would be decided in good time. Kalinsky thought they had caught it early. He seemed an unusually cheerful man, especially for one whose patients, or so Donny assumed, croaked at alarming rates.

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Three weeks later, he got what he supposed was good news. The prostate cancer had not spread, and Kalinsky thought surgery made the most sense, though he welcomed Donny's obtaining a second opinion. The surgery itself wasn't all that dangerous, but the recuperation and after-effects could be difficult. One thing he had to look forward to was months of incontinence, which could even be permanent. Another possibility was impotence, though something like 80 percent of men in his condition regained "limited" potency. Donny didn't want to know what was behind the word "limited"; for now, he would settle for staying alive.

"I guess I'm prepared to go through the surgery," Donny said, "but you have to promise to tell me, Dr. Kalinsky, if the time comes when I no longer have to keep flossing."

Kalinsky, with a smile, promised.

Donny had a date that evening with Bobby. They had agreed to meet near north, at Mei's, a little Chinese restaurant on Clark Street they had been to once before.

He arrived first and took a booth near the back of the still-empty restaurant. Bobby had been visiting her tax lawyer, settling some matters in her husband's rather complicated estate. As he watched her enter and search briefly for him, he once again appreciated her delicacy and elegance. She was wearing a blue suit, with a single-strand necklace of small pearls and pearl earrings. He seemed never to tire of looking at this woman. It wasn't exactly passion he felt, but something calmer, reassuring.

He rose from the booth, and as she walked up to him she held out her free hand and offered her cheek.

"Ah, Chinese, the food of our people," Donny said as the young Chinese waitress presented the menus.

Midway through the meal, after the appetizers, soup, and moo-shu, Donny made his announcement. "I have something sort of sad to tell you. I learned for certain today that I have to have surgery for prostate cancer."

"Oh, my God!" The genuineness of her emotion, he was pleased to note, left no doubt.

"I know," he said.

"When does it happen?"

"In ten days."

"What can I do?" she asked.

"Stay with me," he said, hearing a tremor in his voice. "I'm frightened."

Bobby touched the top of his hand, left her fingers there. He felt tears dribble down his face. He wasn't crying because he was afraid of death; it was life he didn't want to leave.

ALTHOUGH THE surgeon claimed to have gotten all the cancer, eighteen months later—months filled with every physical indignity—it returned, this time attacking the lymph nodes, and metastasizing from there to bone cancer. He and Bobby continued to live separately until, when the end was no longer deniable, she asked him to move into her house in Lincolnwood. He wanted to ask her to marry him, but he knew there were good financial reasons against it, and so he didn't.

Besides, Donny thought, what they had was quite as good as marriage, except for never having had a child together. When they were apart for more than a few hours—and now they rarely were—his life seemed to empty out and then fill up with fear at his imminent death. He felt himself, under the pressure of his sentence, getting wiser, but somehow not quickly enough for it to matter.

His illness made Donny tired, and most nights they watched the VCR in Bobby's den. She had stocked up on the movie candy of their youth—Jujufruits, Dots, Milk Duds, Good 'n' Plenty—and every night she popped corn, not sparing the butter. In his own mind, Donny tried not to dwell on the time he had wasted in his life; but what was left was leaking away all too quickly.

When it looked as if he would have to go into the hospital Bobby arranged for a hospice program to allow him to remain at home. She had a hospital bed put into the den, and Kalinsky instructed her on giving Donny his morphine. Toward the end, as he flitted in and out of consciousness, a round-the-clock nursing service was hired, but he only wanted to be near Bobby. She held his hand, massaged his feet, set cool cloths lightly soaked with bay rum on his forehead. He would look at her, smile, mutter thank you.

He died, slipped away really, with his hand in hers. Five days later a lawyer named Max Liebman called to say that Donny had left his entire estate—after deductions for final expenses, it came to some $650,000—to the Jennifer Levinson Foundation, an institution he had set up to give scholarships to deserving students at the University of Michigan. It was only after making an appointment to go over the details and hanging up the phone that Bobby began—quietly, with an almost pleasing sense of completion—to weep.

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Toward a New Immigration Policy

Peter D. Salins

After a rancorous debate, Congress made a number of changes this past year in the law affecting both legal and illegal immigrants. Legal immigrants will no longer be eligible for most social-welfare programs that are available to American citizens, and the elderly or disabled among them will no longer qualify for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and its tandem medical benefits. Illegal immigrants face closer scrutiny of documents, fewer opportunities to appeal if they are denied political asylum, and more rapid deportation if they commit crimes.

But as significant as what Congress did is what it did not do. A proposal by Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming and Representative Lamar Smith of Texas to reduce sharply the annual quota of legal immigrants was defeated without being put to a vote. And the proposal of California Congressman Elton Gallegly to bar the children of illegal immigrants from attending public schools was defeated after months of heated argument and repeated threats of a veto by President Clinton.

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All in all, the congressional debate and its outcome neatly reflect the state of public feeling about immigration: namely, ambivalence. While opinion polls indicate that growing numbers, particularly in gateway states like California, favor restrictions, the same polls also show that most Americans do not have strong views on the issue at all. This in itself is not surprising: why should people care deeply about an issue which does not affect them directly? But public ambivalence may also be fed by the confusing spectacle of the immigration debate itself, each side of which is represented by normally incompatible bedfellows, some of whom take positions strikingly out of political character.

Thus, on the anti-immigrant side we find, improbably enough, spokesmen for organized labor and civil-rights liberals side by side with nativists, supporters of Ross Perot, and zero- and negative-population-growth zealots. On the pro-immigration side, no less strangely, Latino advocacy groups, high-tech businessmen, and libertarians are to be found allied with cultural conservatives and some old-fashioned liberals.

Such tangled alliances have tended to generate a correspondingly tangled web of assertions and counter-assertions about the costs and the consequences of immigration. At the root of them, I would contend, is a failure to think clearly about our national purposes, and how immigration can and should serve them.

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PERHAPS THE easiest set of issues to deal with is the economic. Many opponents of our current policies argue that immigrants take jobs away from native-born workers, particularly minorities, and otherwise erode American economic strength, the *sine qua non* of national well-being. (A recent statement of the case is by George J. Borjas in the November 1996 *Atlantic.*) In fact, however, the evidence is overwhelming that immigration continues to make an enormous contribution to our economic health. This can be seen even in immigration-inundated California, birthplace of Proposition 187, which prohibits almost all forms of public expenditure on illegal aliens.

Consider the case of San Diego, a city once heavily reliant on military contracts and on the presence of a naval base, and hit hard by the recession of 1989-92 and the post-cold-war military demobilization. Over 20 percent of San Diego's population today is foreign-born, and 30 percent speak a language other than English at home. Yet immigration has made it possible for the local economy to reemerge with a roar: San Diego now boasts a flourishing high-tech industrial sector, low unemployment, enviably modest government expenditures, and a crime rate that has fallen by 24 percent in recent years.

Perhaps the most striking example of a locality whose fortunes have revived because of immigration is New York City. In the 1970's, the city seemed to be in a terminal decline; it lost nearly 600,000 jobs and its population fell by more than a million. By the end of the decade, however, as it began to receive over 100,000 immigrants a year, New York's economy also began to recover, and it regained half the population loss it had suffered in the previous ten years. Today, in neighborhoods where immigrants have congregated—Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, Flushing, Flatbush, Washington Heights, and even the notorious South Bronx—one encounters bustling shopping streets, new housing construction, active parks and playgrounds, declining crime rates, and an atmosphere of vitality and hope. If New York is in any way typical, the physical regeneration of immigrant enclaves also inevitably spills over into adjacent neighborhoods inhabited by poor blacks.

Indeed, the economic and demographic resurgence of neighborhoods in port-of-entry cities like Miami, Los Angeles, El Paso, San Francisco, Chicago, and Boston stands in pointed contrast to the economic malaise of low-immigration cities like Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, and St. Louis. The latter show markedly higher rates of unemployment and welfare dependency—and, not coincidentally, much lower rates of black employment.

THIS IS hardly to deny that immigration sometimes produces short-term economic dislocation. Overall, however, it is impossible to make a good-faith case against immigration on economic grounds alone. Nor, in truth, do most opponents base their arguments solely on economics. It is the cultural costs and benefits of immigration which really preoccupy them, and it is here that the issue of national purpose is most directly joined.

For the past several years, a serious controversy has been raging over whether immigration can continue to play its historic role of stocking America with self-reliant, hard-working, freedom-loving newcomers. Some conservatives, most notably Peter Brimelow, the author of *Alien Nation*,* and John O'Sullivan, the editor of *National Review*, have argued that America is no longer the powerful absorptive machine it once was, and that the unchecked influx of new immigrants, especially from Latin America and elsewhere in the third world, is having an all-but-irreparably damaging effect on our common values and our common culture. Others, however, take an entirely different view. As Francis Fukuyama has written in these pages,† immigrants to the United States may be the *most* dedicated upholders of an uncompromising work ethic and a virtuous and responsible family life. Immigrants stay married and support their children in spite of poverty, and they tend in overwhelming numbers to be religiously observant and to be intent on instilling traditional mores in their children.

Adjudicating this dispute is not easy, in part because the critics, in fixing on immigration as the source of our problems, have been looking in the wrong place. It is certainly the case that as a nation we seem to have been moving away from the unifying conception of *e pluribus unum* toward a divisive brand of ethnic federalism. But this is much more the work of natives than of immigrants. It is generally the case that immigrants themselves tend to resist the corroding impulses of ethnocentricity, and are certainly not to be numbered in the forefront of those who propound and spread them. We can, rather, look to

* Reviewed in COMMENTARY by Peter Skerry, May 1995.

† "Immigrants and Family Values," May 1993.

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the native-born elites of America for the range of policies and doctrines, from affirmative action to bilingual education to multiculturalism, whose effect has been to promote separatism, heighten intergroup friction, and break down our common culture.

Still, the anti-immigration critics are not wholly wrong, either. For the fact is that, whatever immigrants themselves may believe, our policies have helped turn immigration itself into another component of America's ethnic preferential spoils system.

Ever since the United States first developed a comprehensive immigration policy in the 1920's, every formula for designing the mix of newcomers has been wanting in one way or another. The national-origins concept, introduced in the Immigration Act of 1924, was explicitly and outrageously biased against Italians, Jews, and natives of Eastern Europe. That approach was jettisoned in 1965, and our current, vastly liberalized, law has as its central objective the principle of family reunification. This is a superficially attractive criterion, but, by increasingly skewing immigration toward the nationalities of recent immigrants, it has nevertheless led to a latter-day version of the old national-origins system. And this tendency has been further exacerbated by the amnesty offered under the provisions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), which gave legal status to three million illegal immigrants, including over a million Mexicans.

It is this disproportionate conferral of immigration slots on members of a few preferred categories and nationalities which has created the well-founded sense that, like other government-enforced redistributionist schemes in recent decades, our immigration policies are unfairly oriented toward a narrow range of beneficiaries, and are conducing toward the further balkanization of our society. Precisely because that is so, however, the solution offered by the critics—namely, radically curtailing the numbers of immigrants—is no solution at all.

For one thing, those numbers, even including illegal immigrants, are not all that high; as a ratio of the total population, they run well below half what they were at their historical peak in the first decade of the century. For another thing, simply cutting numbers would not address the larger problem of skewed representation. Nor would it get at a related and even deeper problem, which is not that there are too many immigrants, but that those who apply, and those who come, are not required, or even asked, to assimilate.

ONE POWERFUL aspect of the American ethos, captured symbolically in the Statue of Liberty, holds that immigrants are always welcome to our shores; an America that turned its back on that simple but fundamental proposition would, in a profound sense, cease to be America. But another and no less compelling aspect of our national ethos is captured in the image of the melting pot. As immigrants or as descendants of immigrants who have streamed here from lands far and wide, Americans have nonetheless forged what is still one of the most civically and culturally united nations on earth. Their success in doing so was no happy accident. It depended on a powerful assimilationist ethic which demanded that immigrants be integrated into our society, that they subscribe to our civic ideals, take the simple but enormously significant step of becoming citizens, and identify in every important respect with our common national culture.

Today, successful assimilation hinges both on how well immigrants are integrated into American society once they arrive and on how we choose, out of the millions who wish to come, those whom we care to admit. Yet whatever else our immigration policy has been recently, it has not been assimilationist, either in conception or in intent. That is, it has not been consciously aimed at recruiting those who would truly cherish the opportunity to benefit from our open economy, free political institutions, and unique civil society. Our notoriously lax attitude toward illegal immigration sends the message that we do not care enough about who we are as a nation even to enforce our own laws. Our policy toward legal immigrants sends the no less irresponsible message that admission into our national life is conditioned almost entirely on the accidents of birth and nationality. Finally, thanks to the triumph of bilingualism, multiculturalism, and other revisionist ideologies, what we tell our newcomers once they get here—and, worse, their children—is that we do not necessarily expect them to embrace America's most deeply held civic values: to abide by the Protestant ethic, to take pride in American history, to believe in the American Idea, or even to speak the English language.

There is no way to address the legitimate concerns raised by our immigration policies without developing a more assimilationist perspective: one that views immigration as an instrument by

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which the United States grooms its next generation of citizens and revitalizes its civic culture. This, of course, is a sweeping demand, and one properly addressed to American society as a whole; our immigration policies, after all, are only a reflection of our national state of mind, and lately that state of mind, as Nathan Glazer has observed, is one in which "large statements of an American national ideal of inclusion, of assimilation, understandably ring false." Nevertheless, it is possible to point to concrete ways in which just such an ideal might be embodied in our immigration laws and regulations.

The first requirement of an assimilationist policy is to clamp down, and hard, on illegal immigration: it is paradoxical but true that before we can properly include, we need to exclude. Most of today's approaches to this issue amount to more or less wrong-headed attempts to lock the barn door after the horse is gone. Imposing sanctions on employers of illegal immigrants, for example, has failed to accomplish much of anything at all. The proposal that all American citizens and legal residents carry forgery-resistant identification cards, advocated by Senators Simpson, Dianne Feinstein, and others, is rightly resisted by most Americans as an unprecedented governmental intrusion of privacy. And as for the Gallegly amendment and similar measures being considered by some state legislatures, these not only are unattractive on moral grounds but will not succeed either in deterring new illegal immigrants from coming or in making those already here leave.

The only way to reduce the flow of illegal immigrants in a manner consistent with American civic values is to prevent them from gaining entry in the first place. We can do much better than we have done on this score: as Linda Chavez has observed, only 250 miles of our 2,000-mile border with Mexico can be easily traversed by would-be entrants, and with the mobilization of sufficient resources—in equipment, personnel, and training—it should be possible to keep most from crossing.* The same applies to those coming into the country by air or by sea from other places. The fact that we have failed to take the necessary steps has made a laughingstock not only of our entry policies themselves but of the very definition of America as a society of laws. The message thus sent to *legal* immigrants is dispiritingly clear.

AS FOR legal immigration, although numbers are not the issue, it would help a great deal to ease political anxieties if the annual volume were not so wildly unstable as it is now. Instead of treating immigration as a wild card, adjustable year to year depending on changes in administration or on the relative zeal with which we pursue illegals, the United States would be better off setting a single aggregate annual quota. This should be based on a percentage of the U.S. population, with an allowance for anticipated illegal immigration. Indeed, if each year's quota were reduced by the estimated volume of the previous year's illegal influx, that in itself would create powerful incentives across the board for stemming illegal immigration and help assuage the fears of those who believe immigration has been getting out of hand.

The more important point, however, is this: in place of the present arrangement, which favors those lucky enough to have relatives in the U.S. or to have received a good education (and thus qualify for a special skills-based allotment), the key objective of American policy should be to *recruit immigrants who will rapidly and gladly assimilate.*

Practically, the way to begin going about this is to make the criteria for admission at once fairer and more random. Existing law sets aside a small number of slots, awarded by lottery, for the purpose of promoting geographic diversity. We ought to enlarge this category substantially, while at the same time scaling back family preferences, dispensing with skill-based allotments, and considering applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. To avoid being swamped by applicants from the most populous countries (like China and India), limits might be established so that no nation's portion exceeds some specified percentage of the total.

By drawing from a much broader array of countries, on a fairer basis, we would go far toward eliminating our present ethnic spoils system. But this is only the first step. Within the new formula, applicants should be screened, not only for the state of their health, and for any criminal or other unsavory traits in their background, but in order to assess—above all—their reasons for emigrating to the United States, their eagerness to be a part of the American way of life, and their appreciation of America's political institutions.

Finally, a frankly assimilationist policy should revise the process by which immigrants, once here, become American—that is, naturalized. We

* "What To Do About Immigration," COMMENTARY, March 1995.

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have always made this process extraordinarily easy, and the citizenship we confer is also more comprehensive and more unconditional than that offered by other countries. Even so, throughout most of America's history only about half of all immigrants have availed themselves of the privilege. The likelihood of naturalization has also varied greatly by nationality. At all times, the overwhelming majority of Irish, German, and Jewish immigrants became citizens; but among turn-of-the-century immigrants, those from Italy and Eastern Europe were far less likely to do so. Today, Mexicans and other Hispanics have distressingly low naturalization rates.

Ironically, here is where the most controversial and punitive elements of the recently enacted welfare and immigration bills—namely, those that make citizenship, rather than mere legal residency, a condition for receiving a wide array of social-welfare benefits—may have a constructive role to play. That taxpaying legal immigrants should be stripped of welfare benefits has outraged many, liberal and conservative alike, including those who favor reducing the overall number of newcomers. Some have been quick to dismiss the cutoff as another example of neonativism, and President Clinton has hinted he may attempt to reverse the policy. Yet despite the hardship this feature may visit on some, in the end the restrictions might turn out to be a blessing in disguise, first by discouraging those would-be applicants for whom the prospect of immediate welfare eligibility acts as a powerful lure, and second by helping (or forcing) those already here to resist the deadly temptations of dependency and, most importantly, increasing the rate at which they become citizens.

Indeed, that is already happening: the number of applications for citizenship has jumped from an annual average of slightly over 200,000 in the 1980's to over 950,000 in 1993, and in the wake of Congress's most recent actions the numbers have become a veritable flood. Though the motives may not in all cases be pure, citizenship in itself is an unalloyed good, sealing the contract between immigrants and native-born and underlining America's identity as a nation ethnically diverse but culturally unified.

Over the years, nothing—not even concrete economic benefits—has so solidified domestic support for America's immigration experiment as our newcomers' record of successful assimilation, a process which Americans traditionally have insisted upon. But even Americans can be made to doubt the wisdom or efficacy of their traditions. Unless we devise a policy that keeps faith with those traditions, we will continue willy-nilly to lend force to the arguments of the restrictionist minority, and to undermine the good faith and tolerance of the welcoming majority.

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OBSERVATIONS

Among the Abayudaya

Irwin M. Berg

IN ALMOST every way, the Abayudaya, a tiny, native African tribe who live about 160 miles from Kampala, the capital of Uganda, are indistinguishable from their Christian and Muslim neighbors. Like their neighbors, they speak the local language and support themselves as subsistence farmers, growing bananas, casaba, maize, millet, potatoes, and beans for their own consumption. Also like their neighbors, they live without electricity or plumbing in small one-room mud houses with roofs of tin or thatch, and share communal toilet facilities.

In one way, however, they are different. The word "Abayudaya" means "Descendants of Judah"; the Abayudaya are, or consider themselves to be, Jewish, and have practiced Judaism for 77 years in almost complete isolation from the world Jewish community. Four generations have circumcised their sons, rested on the Sabbath, and fasted on Yom Kippur.

About a year and a half ago, a group of American Jews, including my wife and myself, made the journey into the Ugandan interior to visit the Abayudaya, having first equipped ourselves with a knowledge of their history.

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THE ABAYUDAYA are followers of Semei Wakirenzi Kakungulu, a warrior and statesman of the Bagandan tribe who in the 1890's took up with the Bamalaki, a breakaway sect of Protestant fundamentalists who observed Saturday as the Sabbath, declined to eat pork, and permitted polygamy. In time, Kakungulu's devotion to the Bible led him to quarrel with the Bamalaki as well, and to demand that they observe *all* of Moses' commandments, including circumcision. When the Bamalaki claimed that circumcision was practiced only by Jews, Kakungulu is reported to have replied: "If this is the case, then from this day on, I am a Jew (*Muyudaya*)." In 1919, Kakungulu, then over the age of fifty, was circumcised.

But although he declared himself a Jew, Kakungulu still retained a belief in Jesus; the 90-page guide to Jewish laws and beliefs he compiled in 1922 (in the Lugandan language) contains several verses from the New Testament. Indeed, until 1926, there is no evidence that Kakungulu, whose conversion was quite spontaneous, had ever known a Jew or read a Jewish book more recent than the Bible. In that year, however, he met in Kampala a Jewish trader remembered now only as Yusef, or Joseph, and invited him to come and instruct the Abayudaya in the Jewish religion. As a result of Joseph's visit, the Abayudaya ceased to believe in the New Testament or in Jesus; they stopped the practice of baptizing children; they kept the Sabbath strictly; they learned traditional Jewish blessings and prayers; and they learned to slaughter animals in a kosher manner.

At the time of Kakungulu's death in 1928, there were some 3,000 Abayudaya. Over the next 35 years, under pressure from the other local religions and bereft of the support provided by Kakungulu's means and social position, their numbers would dwindle to no more than 300. Some returned to the Bamalaki sect, others to Christianity or Islam; financial pressures brought the school established by Kakungulu under the control of the Anglican Church. By

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the 1960's, the Abayudaya consisted mainly of the elderly, plus some younger women and small children.

It was at this low point in their fortunes that the Abayudaya came to the attention of the outside world. In May 1962 they were visited by an Israeli anthropologist, and letters were subsequently exchanged with Jewish dignitaries in Israel and elsewhere. These contacts improved the morale of the community, whose numbers increased to about 800 by 1971, until the rise of Idi Amin caused another decline in their fortunes. Under Amin's reign of terror, the community was outlawed, its synagogues were closed (one by arson), and all contact between the Abayudaya and the outside world ceased. But after the dictator's downfall in 1979, an enthusiastic reconstruction began. With outside help, youth groups were set up and unmarried young men organized themselves to study books and tapes sent from America. Now, these young men had become the leaders of the community of about 500 African Jews we were about to meet in a primitive village on a hilltop in Uganda.

OUR GROUP—a Reform rabbi from Virginia and three members of his congregation, three social workers, four apprentice filmmakers, a doctor, and three others—disembarked at Entebbe, Uganda, on an early morning in June. We were met by two members of the Abayudaya, Mutusa Judah and Joab Jonadabu Keki, with a van and driver to take us the 200 miles to the village.

By the time we reached Mbale, where we intended to stay, it was seven in the evening and we were running about four hours late. Although we would have preferred to go directly to our hotel, Joab prevailed upon us to go on. The van continued slowly northward to the foothills of Mt. Elgon. Now the villages were smaller, the houses more primitive, the people even poorer than those we had seen along the way. The paved road became a dirt track, steadily more pitted and eroded. After about a half-hour, we turned onto another dirt road and began to climb. At the turn, I saw a sign etched with a star of David. At the top of the hill about 100 people were waiting.

It was a tumultuous welcome. They clapped; they sang; the women shrilled in a ululating tone halfway between a scream and a whistle. Some of the songs were familiar Israeli folk tunes: "*Hevenu Shalom Aleichem*," "*Hava Nagila*." We sang with them for a long time, and it was dark when we left for our hotel.

At eleven the next morning, we were to be introduced to the leaders of the community in the main synagogue, which sits in a compound with a school and two community buildings atop Nabukaye Hill. Built with a $1,000 donation from an American Jew, the synagogue is of brick and mortar, with a roof of corrugated tin. When the money ran out, the spaces for windows and doors were left unfilled. On the day of our visit, the synagogue was so packed some of the women sat on mats on the floor, and the children stood outside peering in. All told, there were about 175 people there to greet us.

WE SAT at a table closest to the ark at the north end of the synagogue, the direction of Jerusalem. Before the introductions began, we were entertained by the Hatikvah ("Hope") Choir, a group of about ten adults and teenagers accompanied by guitar and drum. They began with a "Welcome Song" in English, followed by "Shan't Give Up" ("We shan't give up/ Never, never shall we/ However few we shall be/ Never, never shall we"), a musical rendition of the 23rd Psalm, and a song which began "I love my Lord." Then the community's executive secretary introduced us to the leaders and the schoolteachers. Some names were so unfamiliar I may have recorded them incorrectly, but this is what my notes say: Joab Jonadabu Keki, chairman; Gershom Sizom, youth leader; Israel ben Shadrak, treasurer of the youth council; Berei Yerogi, rabbi and *mohel* (ritual circumciser); Uri Katula William, *mohel*; Aaron Kintu Moses, executive secretary; Ibrahim Daula, introduced as a son of Kakungulu himself (since he appeared to be about fifty-five years old, he may have been a grandson).

The only women presented to us at this ceremony were government teachers at the Nabweye primary school, and I do not know if any were Abayudaya.

After introducing ourselves in turn, we gave them the religious items, cooking utensils, and books on Jewish practice we had brought. That night, the young men would stay up until three o'clock examining the books, particularly the *siddur* (prayerbook) published by the ArtScroll company which contains detailed instructions and explanations. Since the Abayudaya learn mostly from materials sent from America, knowledge of Jewish ritual parallels fluency in English, which means, in its turn, that the young men, who study English in school, know more Hebrew and are more familiar with Jewish holidays and prayers than their elders, whose knowledge comes almost entirely from the Bible (in which they are, however, extraordinarily fluent). Except for the rabbi, all the officers of the community are under forty-five years old; most are under thirty.

Following the formal introductions and gift-giving, we visited the schoolhouse, a dilapidated building where we found the children standing quietly outside in the equatorial sun. Of the 285 children in this religiously mixed school, 185 are Abayudaya. They looked very young—from five to eight—but may have just been small. Both boys and girls had close-cropped hair, and the boys did not cover their heads as Jewish religious custom directs. Many were barefoot and wore

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threadbare garments. The school itself was partly roofless and was without tables or chairs.

THOUGH IT was Thursday, the Abayudaya had arranged to conduct their Sabbath prayer service for us so that it could be filmed. (They were troubled not by the use of electricity—which, after all, they do not have—but by the filmmakers doing their "work" on the Sabbath.) As the synagogue's American donor had also contributed about 30 copies of a Conservative prayerbook, the service was familiar enough, except for some hymns sung in the native language and some, like *Adon Olam* ("Lord of the Universe"), sung in a barely recognizable dialect which turned out to be a mixture of present-day Hebrew and the variant learned by the earliest followers of Kakungulu. Everyone, including the women, joined in these hymns, though participation in the other Hebrew prayers was spottier. (In other synagogues of the Abayudaya—there are four in all—the services are, we were given to understand, much more "traditional," the Hebrew being of this strange, older kind.)

The men and women sat on opposite sides of the room, but there was no partition between them as in a normal Orthodox synagogue. The ark, covered with a white cloth, contained a printed Torah scroll from which the weekly reading was chanted with the help of a regular Bible text. The service was conducted in Israeli-accented Hebrew by Seth bin Jonadabu, the nineteen-year-old drummer from the choir. At its conclusion, the rabbi blessed the congregation with the threefold "priestly blessing," partly in Hebrew and partly in Lugandan.

After the service and a lunch of mangoes, bananas, pineapples, and samosas, I visited the nearby gravesite of Kakungulu. Unlike more recent graves, it bore no Jewish signs or symbols. While examining it, I happened to touch the stone, and this did not go unnoticed. Later, one of the older members of the community commented that, according to the Bible, a person who touches a grave becomes unclean, and asked whether this was still the belief among Jews.

THE NEXT day we visited Hamayony, a village of 750 people of whom 100 are Abayudaya. Here we met Samsoni Mugombi, an old man who had "studied with Kakungulu" and who was described as the spiritual leader of the community. We were also brought to the most austere synagogue I have ever seen: perhaps 25 by 15 feet, built of plaster-coated mud with a tin roof. The front and back walls were covered with Jewish signs and symbols—two tablets of stone, a menorah, stars of David—but there was no ark or Torah, and few benches or chairs.

Most of us spent Friday night—Sabbath eve—back at the Nabukaye compound. A number of the Abayudaya do not return to their homes until the Sabbath is over, and we stayed with them in the two community buildings, sleeping on a concrete floor in a room with no light. The toilet—a shed over a hole in the ground—was down a narrow dirt path about 75 yards away.

At the insistence of the Abayudaya, Sabbath services were conducted by the Reform rabbi in our party, after which we were fed with cold food cooked on Friday afternoon. Some in our party had prepared lectures on topics that might be of interest to the Abayudaya, and we now delivered them with the help of a translator. More interesting than the lectures, however, were the questions. One of us, for instance, had stated that according to Jewish religious law it was permissible to keep food warm on the Sabbath, and the Abayudaya, who traditionally maintained no fire at all on that day, questioned us closely about the procedures for this. Other questions were:

- What can you do if you don't have money for Sabbath candles?
- Can a menstruating woman enter the synagogue?
- If a baby dies before being circumcised, is the child considered Jewish, and may he be buried in a Jewish cemetery?
- What oaths are forgiven on Yom Kippur?
- Did Moses wear shoes on Mt. Sinai when God gave him the Torah? (This question arose out of dismay at the recent discovery that shoes were worn in the synagogue in Nairobi.)

LATER THAT afternoon, as we sat together under a tree, we asked the officers of the synagogue whether it was true, as we had heard, that the community wished to go through a formal process of conversion to Judaism, and why. Their response was intensely moving.

The Abayudaya told us they wanted to be Jews because God's love for the Jewish people was a special thing: only to the Jews had He given the Torah. Judaism, they explained, protected the Abayudaya from the harsh practices of their Gentile neighbors, which included female circumcision. The Jewish method of slaughtering animals was humane. They enjoyed their Sabbath rest—"You get refreshment in your body"—and Yom Kippur offered an opportunity to ask for forgiveness since "no man was ever free from sin." Even if there is no direct reward from God in this life (except for Sabbath rest), in the world to come they would receive the reward God bestows on His chosen people.

That Sabbath afternoon under the tree the Abayudaya also offered us historical and practical reasons for wanting to be accepted by the Jews of the world. The fact that their ancestors had not been born Jewish was, they argued, no impediment; they cited Isaiah 56:6, Esther 8:17, and Zechariah 8:20-23 to demonstrate that anyone could be Jewish as long as he observed the Torah. Still, they felt ignorant of

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much Jewish practice, and, after some 70 years of persecution and decline, they feared their line might die out through intermarriage. To improve the Jewish content of their lives, and to be assured of survival, they wished to be accepted as Jews, by Jews. When we asked them if, like the Ethiopian Jews, they wished to emigrate to Israel, they replied that the Abayudaya had made their commitment to Judaism long before the creation of the state, and the majority would certainly remain in Uganda. Several of the young men, however, expressed a yearning to go: "It is a chance to be free. . . . Spiritually, we are already in Israel."

Then they asked *us* what road they should take. Which Jews would accept them? Which would not? Some of us responded that Jewish life was diverse, and they should feel free to choose among different practices. Others emphasized that only an Orthodox conversion offered them the assurance of being accepted by all Jews everywhere. Despite being told that the Orthodox would encourage them the least, and demand from them the most, they asked that we arrange for an Orthodox rabbi to visit.

We ended our Sabbath with the *havdalah* service—with which the Abayudaya were not familiar—marking the division between sacred and non-sacred time, and said our farewells. It was a painful parting.

HERE IS a rare phenomenon: a group of people who do not—unlike the Ethiopian Jews—claim ancient Jewish lineage, but who have spontaneously sought to become Jews and have maintained themselves without financial or, more crucially, intellectual and spiritual support from without. Exactly why examples of this phenomenon are so few and far between in Jewish history, and the larger question of Judaism's attitude to converts (let alone proselytization), are beyond my scope here. One case, however, not widely known, may be pertinent to that of the Abayudaya.

Around 1930, in the small town of San Nicandro on the southeast coast of Italy, a wine grower named Donato Manduzio was inspired by a dream to preach the truth of the laws of Moses, and gathered about him 23 peasant families. It was not a propitious time for Italian Catholics to decide to become Jews. Manduzio and his followers were threatened by the fascists and by the local clergy; the rabbinate in Rome, fearful of its own precarious position, tried to dissuade them. Finally, in 1944, in the midst of wartime, their conversion was accepted. Manduzio died in 1948, and a year later the entire group moved to Israel, where they have been absorbed into the population. But could they have survived if there had been no Jewish community to welcome them at last?

Democracy and the Religious Right

Peter L. Berger

THE CONTEMPORARY religious Right has deep roots in American history, in effect running back to the very beginnings of American society in various forms of Protestant utopianism which then continued in wave after wave of revivalism. Often this utopianism took explicitly political forms, notably in the campaigns against slavery and against alcohol. But the contemporary story begins in earnest only after World War II. It is a story of how a large evangelical constituency, for the most part politically dormant since the failure of Prohibition, became aroused by what it perceived as powerful aggressions against its most cherished beliefs and values. It is also a story of increasing politicization, from grass-roots beginnings to national organizations, and

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of increasing sophistication. And finally, it is a story of increasing conflict, in particular between the religious Right and the nation's cultural elite.

PARTS OF this story have recently been told in a television series, *With God on Our Side*, created by Lumiere Productions for the Public Broadcasting System, and in a companion volume under the same title by William Martin, who teaches sociology at Rice University.* The PBS series is superb; the photography is excellent, the commentary is kept to a minimum, and, most important, an effort has been made to be thoroughly objective. Martin's book is also a solid piece of work, and well worth reading even if one has not seen the television series.

In their treatment of the political mobilization of evangelicalism in the postwar period, both series and book present Billy Graham as a kind of grandfather figure. It was he who provided the evangelical rationale for anti-Communism in the 1950's, becoming a politically potent figure during the Eisenhower administration and later developing close ties with President Nixon. Though he was shaken by the Watergate fiasco, and thereafter shied away from overtly political entanglements, Graham succeeded in establishing the political and social acceptability of a public evangelical presence in modern America.

But Graham was not alone. The civil-rights struggle of the 1960's also gave legitimacy to evangelical involvement in politics, though it was a legitimacy attenuated somewhat by the fact that evangelical institutions and symbols could be found on both sides of the struggle. What was most notable about the 1960's and early 1970's, however, was something else: they were the years in which increasing numbers of evangelicals came to feel that American society and American culture were turning against them.

Two Supreme Court actions contributed pivotally to this sense: the 1962 decision outlawing school prayer and the 1973 decision permitting abortion. If every society must find ways of answering two basic questions—"who are we?" and "how are we to live together?"—the first of these Court decisions offended the understanding of evangelicals that America was "a nation under God," and the second violated what they considered to be the limits of permissible behavior.

Then there was the cultural revolution of the late 1960's, which flew in the face of evangelical values in a massive way. The impact of the counterculture was felt on a personal level as it made its way into the public schools; it is not surprising that the first battles in which the new religious Right became conspicuously engaged were over curricula and textbooks, as parents organized spontaneously to resist the imposition of hostile values on their children. Only at a more advanced stage did outside institutions enter the fray, on both sides.

IT WAS not until fairly late, with the presidential campaign of 1976, that the mass media discovered the evangelicals. When Jimmy Carter, the Democratic nominee, declared himself "born-again," bewildered editorial writers and television commentators rushed to find out what the term meant, and to what social phenomenon it might refer.

Evangelicals themselves, needless to say, pinned great hopes on the Carter presidency. But these hopes were quickly and quite thoroughly disappointed. Long before Carter was installed in the White House, the Democratic party had been captured by forces committed to the values of the 60's. Even if he had understood the cultural politics of the situation (which almost certainly he did not), it is unlikely he could have reversed the flow of the tide within his party.

From the viewpoint of the evangelicals, the Carter presidency reached its nadir in 1980 with the ill-fated White House Conference on the Family which, in order to accommodate all the so-called alternative "life-styles" that had been made respectable by the revolution of the late 60's, quickly changed its name to the White House Conference on *Families*. But the religious Right's disappointment and outrage soon turned into action. The response took the form of various "pro-family" networks, and as these fledgling efforts at political organization became more sophisticated, they soon branched out in other directions: Phyllis Schlafly and others mobilized to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment, and the anti-abortion movement grew in numbers and dynamism. Although both these latter movements included many nonevangelicals in their ranks, especially conservative Catholics, the evangelical community provided the single most important recruitment ground.

THE CYCLE of hope and disappointment that characterized the evangelicals' experience of Jimmy Carter recurred with Ronald Reagan. Many evangelicals, spearheaded by Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, mobilized for Reagan in the 1980 campaign, but once in office Reagan backed away from his courtship of them and abandoned the positions he had taken during the campaign on abortion and other issues dear to their hearts. Again, the response to disappointment was renewed political effort and ever more sophisticated forms of political organization, which reached a high point in 1988 with Pat Robertson's campaign for the presidency.

This time, the individual at the center was more unassailably one of "their own" than either Carter or Reagan had been. And the 1988 presidential campaign marked an important turning point in another way as well. It was the moment at which evangelicals consciously re-

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pudiated the traditional notion that Christian morality dictated a nonpartisan stance in politics. In its place came a recognition that, when it came to core evangelical values, the Democrats were hopeless, and a determination to try to gain power through the Republican party.

Under the direction of Ralph Reed, Robertson's Christian Coalition played a critical role in the midterm elections of 1990 and 1994, though its presence in the presidential races of 1992 and 1996 was somewhat muted. All in all, however, there is every reason to think that politically mobilized evangelicalism will not soon fade from the American scene.

BOTH THE PBS series and William Martin are excellent guides to all these events, and the series, as I have noted, commendably declines to judge them. Martin, however, closes his volume with a number of conclusions that are at once thin and misleading. Thus, he endorses the religious neutrality of the American state and praises pluralism, while at the same time insisting that religion and politics cannot be rigidly separated. Few would want to quarrel with these general principles, but there are important issues they leave untouched.

The most important has to do with class. As Martin's own narrative makes clear, the religious Right has been a *resistance* movement, a defensive response to a powerful aggression. To say this, of course, is to run head-on into the contrary perception of American progressives, who assert instead that *they* are the victims of an aggression by ayatollah-like reactionaries who would deprive them of their cherished sexual "life-styles" and force their children to sit with hands folded in prayer. Unfortunately for this contention, however, the historical facts vindicate the evangelicals' view of the matter.

The whole cycle was set in motion by the upper, not the lower, levels of the American class system. It was on these upper levels that the cultural revolution of the 60's took place, and from which it departed on its "long march through the institutions." With astonishing swiftness, the revolution captured all the bastions of elite culture in the media, in the academy, and even within the established (nonevangelical) churches, as well as the center of the Democratic party.

As it happens, the stratum that was and remains the "carrier" of this cultural revolution, the stratum which some have called the New Class—an assortment of people who make their living from the production and distribution of ideas—is also the most secularized and secularizing group in American society. It has pushed its agenda with spectacular success, especially in the federal courts and, to a lesser degree, through legislation and regulation.

There is a bizarre paradox here: by any measure, the United States is the most religious country among the Western democracies; yet it is here that the most secularist interpretation has been placed on the relationship between religion and the state. Is it any wonder that this state of affairs has led to outrage?

The struggle over abortion most sharply illuminates the class aspect of the larger culture war. Of course both camps harbor "traitors": there are professors of English at elite universities who oppose abortion, just as there are blue-collar housewives who support it. But for the most part those who belong to the elite culture are in the pro-choice camp, while the culturally unaccredited tend to be pro-life.

The same class dynamic is visible in other areas of conflict—notably in the debates over feminism and the gay movement, over affirmative action, and over multiculturalism. None of these may involve religion directly, but the highly secularist profile of the one camp makes it plausible for the other to gather, at least in part, under the banners of religion. And so it has done, with the religious Right carrying the biggest banner of all.

Interestingly, the American situation, unique as it is in many ways, is not unique in pitting a highly secularized elite culture against a religiously defined populism. Despite large local variations, a similar configuration can be observed in countries around the world. There exists now a globalized elite culture, a kind of New Class International, which is strongly secularist almost everywhere it exists. Again and again, populist rebellions against the imperialism of this class have been linked with resurgences of traditional religion.

But here is another beguiling paradox: by and large, the progressive *Weltanschauung* of those in the cultural elite makes them strong proponents of democracy; but it is democracy itself which gives a voice to the unaccredited and the unwashed, and when these people vote, the elite frequently finds itself appalled at what they vote *for*. Recent elections in India, in Turkey and other Muslim countries, in Israel, and in Latin America have illuminated this paradox. In this matter, at least, the United States, *mutatis mutandis*, is not all that exceptional.

THE QUESTION is, how are we to accommodate these radical differences and still preserve democracy? The longer people remain ranged against each other, the more imperative it becomes to find a middle ground. It may be the task of intellectuals in particular and of the cultural elite in general to conceive this middle ground, but politicians will have to find the means, and the rhetoric, to bring it into being.

So far, neither party has shown much aptitude for the job. Within the precincts of the cultural elite, the secular intelligentsia has aligned itself overwhelmingly on one side of the cultural battle. In the religious establishments, the order of the day

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is internal division: some (Protestants and to a somewhat lesser extent Jews) are split on the cultural issue along denominational lines, others (mainly Catholics) are split within the same church. But in general, the academic world, organized religion, and the media are all badly positioned to play the necessary mediating role (which is why the PBS series on the religious Right comes as such a pleasant surprise).

On the political front, efforts to change the disposition of the Democratic party have so far proved fruitless, Bill Clinton's half-hearted gestures notwithstanding. As for the Republican party, it has shown itself moderately hospitable to the religious-populist upsurge, but its leadership has repeatedly failed to deliver on its promises—probably for the good and sufficient reason that most Republican leaders are personally uneasy with the strange bedfellows forced on them by their tactic (and in many cases it is only a tactic) of accommodation.

So we have a situation of profound cultural conflict in which there are no mediating institutions or processes in sight. It is this fact, and not the allegedly dangerous ideas associated with the religious Right, which today poses the real peril to American democracy.

MUSIC

Fanfare for Aaron Copland

Terry Teachout

WHEN BILL CLINTON and Al Gore gave their victory speeches in Little Rock last November, the music used to introduce them was Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, a piece, one TV anchorman said, embodying "the spirit of the Midwest." Indeed, the composer of such "all-American" works as *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring* has become, by now, as iconic a figure in the history of our culture as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Edward Hopper, or Louis Armstrong. His music is played by symphony orchestras, marching bands, and rock groups, danced to by ballet companies, used in TV commercials, and performed on state occasions. If this country had an official composer, it would be Aaron Copland.

There are numerous ironies in this circumstance, one of which is that the all-American Copland was born in Brooklyn of Russian-Jewish émigré parents, studied composition in Paris with an acolyte of Igor Stravinsky, and was a homosexual and, during the 1930's, a fellow-traveler of the American Communist party. More telling is the fact that, despite his continuing popularity—or because of it—many critics today remain reluctant to treat Copland as a major composer. This is mainly due to Copland's decision in the mid-1930's to abandon the high modernism of his youthful work in favor of a musical style of (in his words) "imposed simplicity." The shift, which made him the most successful classical composer in America, also brought into question his artistic seriousness, and that question still echoes among those who remain committed to the ideals of the musical avant-garde.

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Surprisingly little of value has been written about any aspect of Copland's life or work. No full-length biography has been published. *Copland: 1900 Through 1942* (1984) and *Copland: Since 1943* (1989), a two-volume "memoir" assembled by Vivian Perlis from oral-history transcripts and previously published writings, is guarded in its treatment of his politics and all but silent on his homosexuality. And Copland's correspondence, which (to judge by the handful of letters published in Humphrey Burton's 1994 biography of Leonard Bernstein) was both candid and illuminating, remains uncollected.

The paradoxical result is that Copland is at once America's best-known composer and a mysterious figure. Until a full account appears of his eventful life, the history of American music in the 20th century will have something of a blank spot at its center. Still, on the basis of what we do know it is possible to speculate about what drove Copland, and to arrive at an estimate not only of his significance and influence but of his musical stature.

THE COMPOSER of *Fanfare for the Common Man* grew up in what he would later describe as "a thoroughly bourgeois environment." His father, Harris Copland, emigrated from Lithuania in 1877 and settled in Brooklyn, where he opened a department store and married Sarah Mittenthal in 1885. The Coplands lived over the store with their five children, of whom Aaron, born in 1900, was the youngest. Aaron wrote his first songs as a child, determined to become a professional musician at fifteen, and began studying composition two years later; Rubin Goldmark, his first teacher, had been a student of Antonin Dvorák and gave his own students (another of whom was George Gershwin) a solidly conservative grounding in harmony, counterpoint, and sonata form.

Copland's memoirs say nothing about whether his "thoroughly bourgeois" parents disapproved of his decision to go into music, but they seem to have made no serious objection when he won a scholarship to Fontainebleau, a French summer school for American musicians. So Copland went to Paris in 1921, where he studied with Nadia Boulanger, the 20th century's most influential teacher of composition. Though Boulanger was a master of traditional technique, she was also passionately committed to the cause of contemporary music, especially the neoclassical scores of Igor Stravinsky, and was firmly post-Wagnerian in her stylistic orientation; her taste and methods accorded with Copland's anti-Romantic inclinations, and he quickly became her star pupil.

Copland's progress under Boulanger was so swift that his graduation piece, the Symphony for Organ and Orchestra, was premiered in 1925 by Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony, and performed again shortly thereafter by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony—a heady accomplishment for a twenty-four-year-old who had never before heard any of his music played by an orchestra. Though it now comes across as a thoroughly accessible example of mid-20's modernism, the Organ Symphony shocked its first listeners with its tart harmonies and jazz-derived rhythms. "Ladies and gentlemen," Damrosch told his horrified concert-hall audience, "I am sure that if a gifted young man can write a symphony like this at twenty-three, within five years he will be ready to commit murder."[1]

If Damrosch's widely reported *mot* brought Copland his first national publicity, the work itself had a galvanizing effect on his contemporaries. "The piece that opened the whole door to me," reminisced the composer and critic Virgil Thomson many decades later, "was that Organ Symphony of Aaron's. I thought that it was the voice of America in our generation." Thomson was responding both to the musical merits of the Organ Symphony and to the fact that it was among the first large-scale works by an American composer to owe nothing to the German Romantic tradition which had dominated American musical life throughout the 19th century.

Copland was not, of course, the first to turn his back on this tradition. Charles Ives (1874-1954) began composing in a proto-modernist style shortly after the turn of the century, and Charles Griffes (1884-1920) incorporated Debussyan techniques into his music starting in 1911. But Ives remained isolated throughout his composing life, and Griffes died too young fully to realize his potential. Copland, by contrast, came along at a time when young American composers were looking both for a new style and for a leader, and in the wake of the Organ Symphony's premiere he emerged not only as a composer of promise but also as a musical entrepreneur: he organized concerts, wrote criticism, taught composition and music appreciation, encouraged young talents to study with Nadia Boulanger, and recommended their scores to conductors like Koussevitzky, who performed Copland's own music regularly from 1925 on.

All this activity served a larger goal: advancing Copland's vision of a music which would be international in appeal yet unmistakably reflective of the American national character. "Our concern," he wrote later,

> was not with the quotable hymn or spiritual: we wanted to find a music that would speak of universal things in a vernacular of American speech rhythms. We wanted to write music on a level that left popular music far behind—music with a largeness

[1] The Symphony for Organ and Orchestra has been recorded by Simon Preston, Leonard Slatkin, and the St. Louis Symphony (RCA 09026-68292-2).

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of utterance wholly representative of the country that Whitman had envisaged.

For the elements of this American style, Copland searched both at home and abroad. In his Piano Concerto (1926) and Symphonic Ode (1927-29), he sought to combine the harmonic clarity and rhythmic vitality of Stravinsky's neoclassical scores with the "largeness of utterance" found in the symphonies of Gustav Mahler (another composer to whom he had been introduced by Boulanger), coloring the whole with the syncopations and blues-inflected melodies of jazz. By the early 30's, the jazz was mostly gone, and the Mahleresque grandiosity had been replaced by the laconic approach of such tightly organized works as the Piano Variations (1930) and Short Symphony (1933). Yet all these pieces were strikingly individual and recognizably American in tone, and they established Copland as the most important American composer of his generation.[2]

THUS FAR, the outlines of Aaron Copland's story are familiar to anyone with more than a casual awareness of the history of American music. But starting in the 30's, the received version of Copland's life—one which the composer himself recounted on numerous occasions—diverges from the facts.

According to Copland's own 1941 account, he came in time to feel dissatisfied with the failure of ordinary American concertgoers to respond to his music, and resolved to change his style accordingly:

> The old "special" public of the modern music concerts [of the 20's] had fallen away, and the conventional concert public continued apathetic or indifferent to anything but the established classics. . . . I felt that it was worth the effort to see if I couldn't say what I had to say in the simplest possible terms.

The result was *El salón México* (1933-36), a musical portrait of a visit to a "popular-type" dance hall in Mexico City. Based on folk melodies, *El salón México* contains all the fingerprints of the composer's "modernist" style—the angular rhythms and shifting time signatures, the bright, brassy orchestral palette, the piquant bitonal harmonies—presented in a simplified, more readily appealing form. *El salón México* was an immediate success: within a year of its publication, it had been performed by sixteen American orchestras (including two radio orchestras) and five foreign orchestras, and it remains to this day one of the most popular orchestral pieces ever written by an American composer.[3]

Copland subsequently wrote many other "American-style" works aimed at a popular audience, including the ballets *Billy the Kid* (1938, choreographed by Eugene Loring) and *Rodeo* (1942, choreographed by Agnes de Mille); the scores for the Hollywood films *Of Mice and Men* (1939), *Our Town* (1940), *The Red Pony* (1948), and *The Heiress* (1948); and several shorter pieces for orchestra, among them *Prairie Journal* (1937), *An Outdoor Overture* (1938), *John Henry* (1940), *Lincoln Portrait* (1942), the ubiquitous *Fanfare for the Common Man* (1942), and *Letter from Home* (1943). Though some of these pieces are of greater musical interest than others, all are beautifully crafted, and, taken together, they constitute, in Virgil Thomson's words, "a high-level contribution to light music that may well be [Copland's] most valued legacy."[4]

BUT COPLAND's decision to simplify his musical language arose from more than just an understandable desire to reach out to a larger (and more remunerative) audience. At least in part and at least at first, it also constituted a specifically political statement, one which ran parallel to the cultural policies of the American Communist party in the mid-30's.

Copland had been interested in left-wing politics since 1919, when he played piano at dances held at Brooklyn's Finnish Socialist Hall and learned about the philosophy of Eugene V. Debs from the clarinet player in the house band. In 1930 he helped to organize the Group Theater, where he met the playwright Clifford Odets, the director Elia Kazan, and various other young radicals. Starting in 1934, Copland became involved with numerous Communist-controlled groups, including the Composers Collective of New York (whose members included the Stalinist composer Marc Blitzstein), and began writing for the *New Masses*, the Communist-party periodical. In its pages he reviewed the *Workers' Song Book No. 1* of the Composers' Collective (to which he had contributed) and published a "mass song" called *Into the Streets May First*.[5]

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[2] *Copland the Modernist*, a new CD by Garrick Ohlsson, Michael Tilson Thomas, and the San Francisco Symphony, contains exceptional performances of the Piano Concerto, Symphonic Ode, and Short Symphony (RCA 09026-68541-2). The best currently available recording of the Piano Variations, by Leo Smit, is part of a two-CD set of Copland's complete solo piano music (Sony SM2K 66345).

[3] Serge Koussevitzky's premiere recording with the Boston Symphony, made in 1938, is part of *Koussevitzky Conducts American Music* (Pearl GEMM CD 9492). Also available is a wonderfully vivid live performance recorded in 1991 by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic (DGG 431 672-2GH).

[4] Leonard Slatkin and the St. Louis Symphony have made excellent recordings of the complete ballet scores for *Billy the Kid* and *Rodeo* (EMI CDC 7 47382 2) and the suites from *Our Town*, *The Red Pony*, and *The Heiress* (RCA 09026-61699-2). Copland's own interpretations of his light orchestral pieces, recorded in the 60's and 70's, are included in *The Copland Collection: Orchestral and Ballet Works, 1936-1948* (Sony SM3K-46559, three CD's); unfortunately, he was not a virtuoso conductor, and these performances, while of obvious historical interest, are uneven in quality.

[5] The manuscript of *Into the Streets May First* is in *Copland: 1900 Through 1942*.

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The key date in Copland's political life, however, was 1935, the year that the Moscow-directed Communist International (Comintern) proclaimed the establishment of the Popular Front. This was the "anti-fascist" alliance through which the Soviet Union sought to coopt liberals in America and elsewhere by, among other things, encouraging the development of a Stalinist-shaped middlebrow culture, comparable in its stultifying high-mindedness and philistine utilitarianism to the "socialist realism" imposed on Soviet artists by the Kremlin. Looking back in 1947, the cultural critic Robert Warshow wrote that in the Popular Front years,

> radicalism entered upon an age of organized mass disingenuousness, when every act and every idea had behind it some "larger consideration" which destroyed its honesty and its meaning. . . . The whole level of thought and discussion, the level of culture itself, had been lowered. The soap-box speech merged with the Fourth of July oration. A poet became Librarian of Congress and denounced American intellectuals for weakening their country's spirit. . . . [John Steinbeck's] *The Grapes of Wrath* was a great novel. Eventually, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* was a serious movie and *Ballad for Americans* was an inspired song.[6]

To speak of American culture in the 30's is in large part to speak of the fruits of the Popular Front and its adherents, both conscious and unconscious: the plays of Odets and Lillian Hellman, the novels of Steinbeck, the poetry of Archibald MacLeish—and, inevitably, the music of Aaron Copland. Though Copland had begun work on *El salón México* prior to 1935, the shift of party policy in that year must surely have struck him as opportune. His own public statements on the virtues of proletarian art had been ambiguous at best; he was, it seems, understandably uncomfortable with the idea of using his music as a weapon in the fight against capitalism. Now the advent of the Popular Front, according to which the bourgeois artist was no longer to be considered a class enemy of the revolutionary cause, simultaneously solved Copland's political problem and gave him a new sense of artistic direction. In Vivian Perlis's revealing words:

> Never again would Copland attempt to reach a more popular audience with a "workers' song" or for political reasons. When the Popular Front came along in 1935, bringing a wider recognition and appreciation of American folk music, the way was opened for Copland to adopt a simpler, more direct music style using quotation or simulation of folk tunes in productions outside the concert hall—ballet, theater, radio, and film.

While Copland claimed never to have joined the Communist party, he remained close to its members throughout the 30's and 40's, composing the score for the 1943 pro-Soviet Hollywood movie *North Star* (written by Lillian Hellman), lending his name to numerous Communist-front organizations (in some cases apparently at the behest of Serge Koussevitzky), and playing a prominent part in the Soviet-controlled Waldorf Peace Conference of 1949.

It was thus predictable that Copland would later be tarred with the same critical brush as the Steinbecks and Blitzsteins, and that his reputation as a serious artist would suffer as a result. But there was a crucial difference between the composer of *El salón México* and the author of *The Grapes of Wrath*: Copland knew he was writing light music, while Steinbeck believed himself to be writing a great novel. And whatever his initial reasons for simplifying his style, Copland did not intend his light pieces to be musically unserious—merely accessible. "I like to think," he told a friend in 1943, "that I have touched off for myself and others a kind of musical naturalness that we have badly needed."

In any case, the acid test of Copland's seriousness is not to be found in his lighter pieces, but in the "abstract" compositions which he also produced during the middle years of his career, ranging from such large-scale utterances as the Piano Sonata (1939-41) and Third Symphony (1944-46) to the more intimate Violin Sonata (1942-43) and *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* (1944-50).

These works are self-evidently the work of the "all-American" composer of *Billy the Kid*. But they are sparer in texture and more concentrated in expression. Here, the open-prairie plainness of the light music has been transposed into a minor key, and there can be little doubt that the composer's psychic "subject matter" is the loneliness and alienation of urban life: in a piece like the masterly *Quiet City* (1941), the grandly proclamatory gestures of the early works have been transformed into a controlled yet intensely melancholy lyricism.[7] And here, too, Copland's Jewishness came to the fore: the long arches of melody heard in the middle-period music are like modern songs of lamentation, rooted in the cantilla-

[6] "The Legacy of the 30's," Commentary, December 1947. *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939), directed by Anatole Litvak, was the first "anti-fascist" Hollywood movie. *Ballad for Americans* (1939), set by Earl Robinson to a text by John Latouche, was a patriotic "cantata" in the Popular Front-middlebrow style which figured prominently in the repertoire of Paul Robeson.

[7] Leonard Bernstein's definitive 1947 recording of the Piano Sonata is available on RCA 09026-60915-2; the Third Symphony and *Quiet City*, with Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic, are on DGG 419 170-2GH. The Violin Sonata has been recorded by Glenn Dicterow, concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic (EMI CDC 5 55405 2). *Long Time Ago* contains orchestral versions of eight of the Dickinson songs, sensitively performed by Dawn Upshaw, with Hugh Wolff and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (Teldec 9031-77310-2).

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tions of a much older culture. "I thought he was a prophet calling out to Israel," Virgil Thomson told Vivian Perlis, "the Jewish preacher telling people right and wrong."

Interestingly, Copland sought to fuse his popular and "serious" manners in several of his middle-period works, most notably the Third Symphony, the scores for *Our Town* and *The Heiress*, the Clarinet Concerto composed for Benny Goodman (1947-48), and the opera *The Tender Land* (1952-54). But it is in his score for Martha Graham's ballet *Appalachian Spring* (1943-44) that Copland's two musical sides achieve their fullest synthesis: in this piece, his light-music style is elevated to greatness by an extraordinary refinement of means and intent. Scored with uncanny transparency for an ensemble of thirteen instruments, *Appalachian Spring* is Copland's masterpiece, a work comparable in quality to the ballet scores of Stravinsky and Tchaikowsky.[8]

To praise the music of Copland's middle period is not to dismiss as unimportant his earlier works, some of which, the Piano Variations and Short Symphony in particular, are no less masterly than *Appalachian Spring* or *Quiet City*. But the overall superiority of the middle-period music lies in its increased economy and directness—qualities which were brought out in Copland by his decision to adopt a populist style. Whether he made that decision for personal or for political reasons (more likely, for some mixture of the two), the fact is that in turning away from the high modernism of his youth, Copland found his true voice as a composer.

IT WAS not until after the Waldorf Conference in 1949, at which he was reportedly shocked by the conduct of the Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich (who announced under painfully obvious duress that "Stravinsky is not a good composer—he does not compose for the masses"), that Copland ceased to involve himself in leftist causes. By this time, however, his political activities had come to the attention of anti-Communist investigators. He was listed in *Red Channels*, a booklet containing the names of suspected Communists in the broadcast media, and his *Lincoln Portrait* was subsequently dropped from the program of Dwight Eisenhower's inaugural concert in 1952; the following year, he was interrogated by Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. Thereafter, he had nothing to say about politics, save to his closest friends.[9]

Even at the height of the McCarthy era, however, Copland remained a genuinely popular composer. Ironically, his greatest difficulties in the postwar period lay not with the public, which seemed ready enough to forgive him his politics, but with his colleagues, who may or may not have disapproved of his politics but who could not forgive him his popularity. As far back as *El salón México*, many of Copland's contemporaries had begun to view him as a traitor to the modernist cause. By 1970, Leonard Bernstein, his beloved friend and loyal interpreter, wrote ruefully that young musicians, among whom the "Schoenberg syndrome" had taken hold, had "gradually stopped flocking to Aaron."

Like Stravinsky, Copland did seek in later life to master the international language of postwar modernism, producing a series of works—the Piano Quartet (1950), the Piano Fantasy (1952-57), and a pair of late works for orchestra called *Connotations* (1962) and *Inscape* (1967)—which make highly personal use of the twelve-tone method of composition associated with the name of Arnold Schoenberg. But none of these works found favor with concertgoers, and it is possible that the seeming resurgence of creativity inspired by his flirtation with serialism actually served to mask a loss of inspiration. Starting in the 50's, Copland launched a second career as a guest conductor of symphony orchestras; he devoted less time and energy to composing, and after the early 70's he produced nothing but fragments.[10]

The reason for Copland's decline as a composer may also have been organic. From the 70's on, his lapses of memory were the subject of concerned talk in the musical community, and they eventually forced him to stop conducting in 1982; though he subsequently published his memoirs, it became known that he was suffering from Alzheimer's. He died in 1990, not long after Leonard Bernstein.

AROUND THE time Aaron Copland stopped composing, the critic Samuel Lipman wrote:

> We have come to the end of a chapter in American music, as we have come to the end of a chapter in our national life. In music, if nowhere else, internationalism has triumphed, and we are all homogenized. Whatever the future

[8] Stanley Drucker has recorded the Clarinet Concerto with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic (DGG 431 672-2GH). *The Tender Land*, with an ensemble led by Philip Brunelle, is on Virgin 59207 (two CD's). Copland's later version for full orchestra of *Appalachian Spring* has been recorded innumerable times, but the chamber version is truer to the spirit of the piece; Andrew Schenck and the Atlantic Sinfonietta have rendered the complete score in its original instrumentation, restoring several passages Copland cut for concert-hall performance (Koch International 3-7019-2H1).

[9] The sections of Copland's memoirs dealing with political matters were written not by him but by Vivian Perlis, and were not published until after the onset of Alzheimer's disease had forced him to stop making all but the most perfunctory public appearances.

[10] Performances by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic of *Connotations* and *Inscape* are included in *The Copland Collection: Orchestral Works, 1948-1971* (SM2K-47236, two CD's). A performance by members of the New York Philharmonic of the Piano Quartet is coupled with Glenn Dicterow's recording of the Violin Sonata; Leo Smit's recording of the Piano Fantasy is part of his two-CD set of Copland's piano music.

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shape of American music, it will not follow in the directions toward which Aaron Copland's music once seemed to lead.[11]

But the ensuing years have given grounds to qualify Lipman's prediction. The future of American music, in fact, now seems to be leading back to Copland: young American composers, themselves increasingly disenchanted with the "triumph" of internationalism, are once again quick to cite him as an influence, and his music is played more widely than ever before. Of course it may be that in our present age of identity politics Copland serves a number of extramusical agendas. If so, however, he serves them illegitimately. For Copland was his own melting pot. No "queer theory" can account for his musical achievement; no cultural politician can explain how he drew from the stifling banality of the Popular Front the inspiration for his deservedly most memorable works. The only explanation is genius.

Whatever the future brings, its historians will record that Aaron Copland's music served as the model for the modern American style of classical composition. In developing that style, he proved yet again the truth of Ralph Vaughan Williams's dictum that "if the roots of your art are firmly planted in your own soil and that soil has anything individual to give you, you may still gain the whole world and not lose your own soul." By expressing the American national character in music, Copland gave full expression to his own genius, and so created masterpieces of universal appeal that continue to speak to listeners around the world. He is, in every sense, the great American composer.

[11] "Copland as American Composer," COMMENTARY, April 1976.

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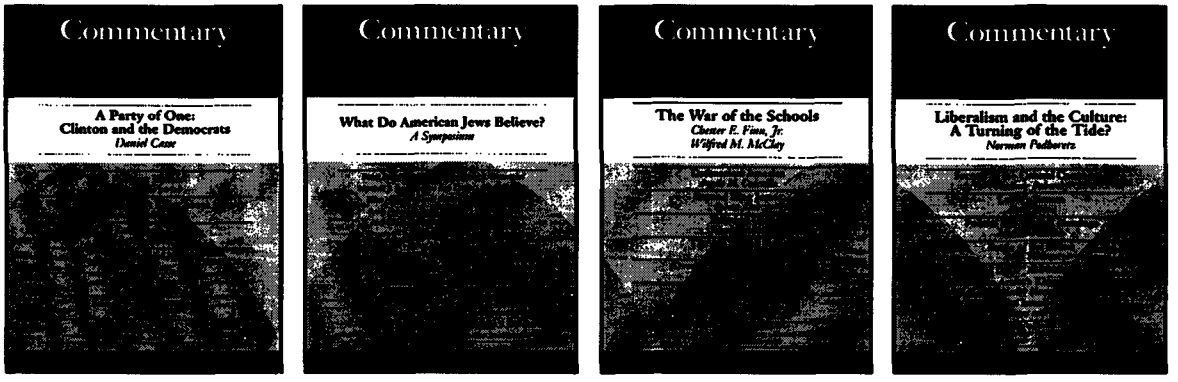

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Books in Review

The Sky Is Falling

Will America Grow Up Before It Grows Old? How the Coming Social Security Crisis Threatens You, Your Family, and Your Country

by Peter G. Peterson

Random House. 237 pp. $21.00

Reviewed by
Daniel Casse

PETER G. PETERSON, a Wall Street banker, a former Secretary of Commerce (under President Nixon), and a founder of the Concord Coalition, a Washington advocacy group of deficit-hawk heavyweights, has for fifteen years been crying out—less in the wilderness than within the capital Beltway—about the precarious fiscal position of the U.S. government. *Will America Grow Up Before It Grows Old?* is his third book devoted to the impending crisis he sees facing us. In it he argues that unless dramatic changes are introduced into Social Security, Medicare, and the tax system, our social safety net will collapse, and with it the nation's ability to prosper.

Despite the tone of intense urgency sounded throughout this book, and epitomized by the alarm rung in its subtitle, it would be wrong to dismiss Peterson as the Chicken Little of the Washington/Wall Street establishment. Using an array of statistics and color charts to buttress his argument, he mounts a powerful case that the entitlement programs of Social Security and Medicare cannot be sustained as they are—the sky, he maintains convincingly, really is falling.

SEVENTY-SIX MILLION baby boomers in the labor force currently pay taxes into the Social Security system. As this generation ages and leaves the employment market, the demands on our national retirement system will rise to an unprecedented degree. At present, slightly more than one in ten Americans is over the age of 65. By 2040, the proportion will be one in four. We are turning inexorably into what Peterson calls "a nation of Floridas."

With fewer workers paying for the benefits of a greater number of retirees, the Social Security trust fund will begin to run a deficit by 2013. Within 40 years after that, it will have accumulated a shortfall of more than $1 trillion. Yet despite this yawning budgetary gap, and despite the widespread conviction that Social Security payments are not enough in any case to provide a comfortable retirement, the bulk of today's workers save woefully little. From these low savings rates, Peterson concludes that Americans are "in denial" about the crisis lurking around the corner.

Much of Peterson's book is therefore devoted to laying out a detailed program to reconcile the nation's books. He recommends a switch from an income- to a consumption-based tax; a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget; stricter limits on Medicare spending; raising to 70 the age at which one becomes eligible for Social Security; and ultimately creating a

DANIEL CASSE's *article, "A Party of One: Clinton and the Democrats," appeared in our July 1996 issue.*

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mandatory retirement fund that would be private and portable.

By far the most contentious element of his plan is to phase out Social Security benefits for those making in excess of $40,000 a year, a figure slightly higher than the national median income. Those earning more, he suggests, should forfeit 10 percent of their benefits, and then an additional 10 percent for each extra $10,000 in annual income they receive. These steps would generate enough revenue, Peterson estimates, to replenish the Social Security trust fund and even leave it with a modest surplus by 2030, the year the last of the baby boomers will have reached 65.

Some of Peterson's proposals are less revolutionary than the tenor of his book suggests. Congress, for example, has already raised the age at which seniors become eligible for benefits, though to 67 rather than 70. Tax reform of every variety, including a consumption tax, has been on the table for over two years and will continue to be vigorously debated, if not enacted, in the years ahead. Social Security has begun to lose its reputation as the dreaded "third rail" of American politics, electrocuting the careers of those who propose fundamental change; in the Senate's last session, a bill partially privatizing the system was introduced and respectfully considered. It is hard to imagine that any presidential candidate in the year 2000 will be without some proposal to address the problem of runaway entitlement spending.

What truly *is* radical about Peterson's approach is his plan to impose a means test—he calls it an "affluence" test—on Social Security recipients, with (as noted) a view to reducing benefits for those earning more than $40,000. This would undoubtedly go a long way toward restoring the program to financial health, but it would have other far less desirable consequences as well.

For all its fiscal problems, the universal structure of Social Security, in which everyone who "contributes" is entitled to receive its benefits, has been a major source of the program's success. Social Security has not engendered the class distinctions or perverse incentives that have plagued virtually every other American social program. It operates with remarkable efficiency, and with little evidence of fraud or abuse, despite the colossal bureaucracy administering it. And not incidentally, its payments to the elderly have done more to reduce poverty than any other governmental effort.

None of this is to say that Social Security's pay-as-you-go system, in which today's workers pay for the benefits of today's retirees, should remain intact. The system is unsustainable. But it does suggest that restructuring it is as much a political question as a fiscal one. Social Security's popularity and political viability would hardly endure if it were transformed into a welfare program for the poor, paid for by the middle class. Yet that would be precisely the effect of Peterson's plan.

The penalty on middle-class and well-to-do taxpayers would be considerable. To the 11.5-percent payroll taxes now paid by employees and employers to support Social Security would be added an additional 5-percent payroll tax to fund Peterson's mandatory private-pension system. Not only would this new tax discourage job creation and crimp economic growth, it would dramatically increase the tax burden on middle-class Americans while decreasing the benefits they receive. Peterson calls this a sacrifice. Most taxpayers would call it confiscation.

In short, both Peterson's means test and the measures accompanying it would save Social Security

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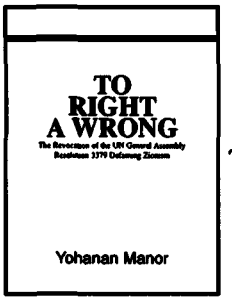

TO RIGHT A WRONG

The Revocation of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 Defaming Zionism
by Dr. Yohanan Manor
Just published
ISBN0-88400-189-X (Hardcover) 281 p. $25.00

"I don't remember a single day in the General Assembly that this slander was not repeated" - ***Binyamin Netanyahu***

"This is an opportunity to express the gratitude of the Jewish people and of the State of Israel to all those who understood the need to take the offensive, who fought for the repeal of this mendacious resolution... and who did persist until its actual demise" - ***Shimon Peres***

"The Zionist movement represents the authentic rebellion of a people that, tired of persecution and insults for many centuries and of participating in the revolutions of the world which freed other peoples, decided one day to start its own revolution of national redemption..." - ***Chaim Herzog***

"Israel has little to fear from the strictly military balance. But I believe that Israel has much to fear from the ideological assault aimed at branding Israel as illegitimate" - ***Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan***

"I knew we would not be able to perform miracles, but what we could do was to light a fire at the U.N. and feed the flames by initiating an active campaign against the resolution..." - ***Uzi Narkiss***

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from deficits only by destroying it politically.

BUT THAT is not the only flaw in Peterson's approach. Even in the case of the sensible goals he recommends—such as replacing Social Security with a system of privately controlled retirement funds—he never formulates a realistic political strategy to arrive at them. To him, resistance to reform is merely evidence of a political culture dominated by special interests, and of a public so lulled by tax cuts and deficit spending that it believes it can have its cake and retire, too. The need to reach compromises and take incremental steps, and the fact that his own plan could never survive the path through congressional committees, are merely proof to him that our democracy is failing. America, as he suggests in his title, needs to grow up.

But growing up, in this case, seems to mean dispensing with representative government. Peterson notes without a critical word that Chile's much-praised, privately run social-security system was established under a dictatorship; the political figure he cites most approvingly is Lee Kuan Yew, the authoritarian leader of Singapore, who has suggested that parents sue their children for support before daring to apply for government benefits. Obviously, Peterson is not calling for anything resembling dictatorship in the United States, but his preferred mode of policy-making is still the blue-ribbon commission or the distinguished panel of experts that will come up with a sweeping, top-to-bottom plan—*his* plan, that is—to be enacted without change or qualification.

Whether this faith in comprehensive plans proposed by experts is justified remains, of course, very much an open question. But it is worth pointing out that in just the past four years, we have seen two attempts to introduce massive policy changes by means of a single, all-encompassing plan. The first was a national health-care plan that proved a political catastrophe for the Democrats. The second was an attempt to ram through massive cuts in federal spending that left Newt Gingrich and the Republicans with wounds from which they have not yet recovered.

Peterson seems to have drawn no lessons from these debacles, both of which show that all-or-nothing attempts at reform tend to end in nothing. While he has performed a public service in calling attention to the approaching fiscal crisis, he has not much advanced our discussion of the really acute problem, which is how, *within* the constraints of our untidy, imperfect democracy, we are to get from A to B.

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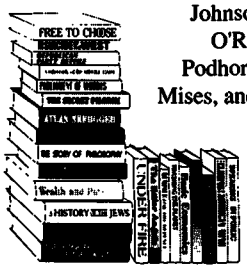

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Blaming the Jews

Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust
by Shabtai Teveth
Harcourt Brace. 310 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
Hillel Halkin

THREE YEARS ago I wrote a harsh review for the weekly *Forward* of a book called *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* by Tom Segev, an Israeli journalist turned popular historian. Segev's book was in large part an attack on the leaders of the Jewish settlement (Yishuv) in Palestine during World War II, and especially on David Ben-Gurion, then head of the Jewish Agency Executive, for being either shockingly unconcerned or callously instrumental in their attitude toward the murder of European Jewry.

In my review of the book I dwelt particularly on this thesis, citing as an example of Segev's dishonest argumentation a passage deliberately fostering the illusion that a March 1942 Hebrew newspaper editorial minimizing the dimensions of the Holocaust had appeared months later than it did. Although I suspected *The Seventh Million* of containing many more such misleading sleights of hand, I was not well-read enough in the period to spot most of them.

Shabtai Teveth, an Israeli journalist turned serious historian, and a biographer of David Ben-Gurion, is well-read in it—and has confirmed my suspicions. With Tom Segev's book as his main target, he has mounted a devastating counterattack not just on Segev himself but on the entire phenomenon of what he calls the "Jewish revisionism" of "Jews blaming Jews for not having

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rescued Europe's Jews from the Holocaust" and even "for helping the Nazis bring about the Holocaust." In doing so, he has shown how a disparate coalition of historical revisionists who otherwise have little in common—right-wing critics of Ben-Gurion and his colleagues, left-wing ideologues in Israel and elsewhere, ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionists, post-Zionist "new historians"—have joined over the years to cite and repeat each other's distortions, thereby creating the impression of a formidable body of scholarly literature sustaining their claims when in fact there is none at all.

One of the many examples that Teveth analyzes is that of the so-called "Europa Plan," as part of which, in the first half of 1943, negotiations were conducted with a high-ranking SS officer named Dieter Wisleceny who had offered to stop the shipment of 2.5 million Jews to the death camps in return for $2-3 million. A go-between in these talks was the ultra-Orthodox Hungarian rabbi Michael Dov-Ber Weissmandel, who later wrote a book accusing the Zionist leadership of sabotaging the plan. To support his case, Weissmandel cited a letter he claimed to have seen that had been written to Zionist activists in Slovakia by a field worker in Geneva named Nathan Schwalb; in that letter, Schwalb allegedly explained to his colleagues that Zionism, in order to sting the world's conscience after the war, needed not live Jews but dead ones, and that the sum of money he was enclosing was intended to provide solely for the private escape of the letter's recipients.

Weissmandel's accusation was first picked up and widely circulated after the war by his ultra-Orthodox brethren. It was then repeated by the parliamentary opposition in Israel in connection with the Rudolf Kasztner trial in the mid-1950's, which involved charges of Zionist-Nazi complicity in Hungary; it formed the basis of the anti-Zionist drama *Perdition* (1986), written by the non-Jewish English playwright Jim Allen; and it is accepted as factual by Segev. Yet as Teveth shows, not only was the SS officer almost certainly a swindler who had no intention, let alone capability, of making good on his promise; and not only did the Jewish Agency Executive in Palestine, despite its awareness of this, try hard to come up with the money (a sum equivalent to a far larger amount today, and not easily raisable under wartime conditions when ordinary travel and mail were disrupted), but Schwalb himself worked tirelessly on behalf of the Europa Plan. He never wrote the letter which Weissmandel insisted he had seen.

Or take the notorious "Trucks for Blood" episode in mid-1944, which involved a real (if not necessarily sincere) Nazi offer, apparently originating with Adolf Eichmann and made to a Hungarian Zionist named Joel Brand, to trade a million Hungarian Jews for 10,000 trucks to be supplied to the Germans by the Allies. According to Segev in *The Seventh Million*, even if

> the Jewish Agency was unable, by itself, to deliver 10,000 trucks to the Nazis . . . it would seem that [it] did not do all it could to lead on the Germans behind the backs of the British. . . . [It] was time for a great bluff. The Yishuv leadership could have disobeyed the British orders [not to deal with Eichmann's representatives] and negotiated secretly with the Nazis . . . but nothing was done.

As Teveth documents, however, from the moment Brand landed in Istanbul in mid-May until his release from British preventive detention in Cairo in October, when there were no longer any Hungarian Jews left to save, the Jewish Agency made frantic efforts to have him sent back to Hungary with an Allied acceptance, real or pretended, of Eichmann's offer. The British, who were perhaps more afraid of a million Jews with nowhere to go but Palestine than of the use the Germans might make of the trucks, would not even let the Agency's "foreign minister," Moshe Sharett, meet with Brand, much less return Brand to Budapest to try to string Eichmann along. Even to bluff one needs *some* cards; Ben-Gurion had none.

In case after case like this, Teveth demonstrates that, despite assertions to the contrary, the Zionist leadership in Palestine did what it could, and that if it saved pitifully few Jews, this was because there was pitifully little it *could* do. Without an army, air force, navy, or diplomatic corps; with no means of reliable contact with operatives behind Nazi lines; with hardly any money; with no support from, or leverage on, the world's governments and little interest on the part of the world's press; totally dependent for the sim-

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plest logistical support on hostile or uncaring British officials in Jerusalem and London; exposed until the battle of El Alamein in late 1942 to Rommel's threatened conquest of Palestine, which would have sent them to the gas chambers too, the half-million Jews of the Yishuv were reduced to reading of the slaughter in Europe with clenched teeth. Ben-Gurion spoke for his and their anguish when he cried out to the nations of the world in a July 1944 address:

> What have you allowed to be perpetrated against a defenseless people while you stood aside and let them bleed to death, never lifting a finger to help? Why do you profane our pain and wrath with empty expressions of sympathy which ring like mockery in [our] ears?

THE REAL question, then, is not whether there was Zionist indifference toward, much less collusion with, the Nazi genocide. It is what can have motivated and sustained such a horrendous self-accusation among its Jewish and Israeli propagators.

In the case of Weissmandel, by all accounts an honest man who nevertheless "remembered" seeing a letter that never existed, Teveth suggests that—besides being influenced by the anti-Zionism of his ultra-Orthodox milieu—he deluded himself in order to cope with a haunting guilt. Having escaped the Nazis himself by slipping off a train on which he left behind his wife and five children, all of whom perished, he was, by the testimony of those who knew him, a tormented being who prayed for an early death. "Perhaps," writes Teveth,

> the ever-present image of the mother and children on the Auschwitz-bound train . . . [bolstered] his belief that, had it not been for the Zionists, his Europa Plan would have paid off and his wife and children would be alive. . . .

Perhaps; we will never know. On a broader scale, however, unacknowledged guilt among both Jews and Gentiles may have played a greater role in generating various kinds of Holocaust revisionism than is generally ascribed to it. It is perhaps little wonder that a Gentile world unwilling to this day to accept responsibility for its passive role in Hitler's genocide has resorted to a wide range of guilt-avoidance stratagems. Some of these, like gross Holocaust denial, are openly pathological; others project onto the Jews the qualities and identity of their persecutors, as is the case with accusations of Zionist-Nazi collaboration and—a more popular variation on the same theme—the assertion that Israel today treats the Palestinians as the Germans treated the Jews. Even Holocaust museums (like the one in Washington) that stress their host country's solidarity with those who died, and pride in having helped liberate a saving remnant of them, serve to repress the past at the same time that they commemorate it.

BUT WHAT do Jews, at least those with a less tortured personal history than Weissmandel's, have to feel guilty about? What makes a Tom Segev, or a Hannah Arendt, whose *Eichmann in Jerusalem* was perhaps the first attempt by a major Jewish intellectual to implicate the Jews in the Nazis' murder of them, turn so viciously on their own people? Very likely we are dealing with examples of what Ruth R. Wisse, in speaking of the Jewish internalization of anti-Semitic attitudes, trenchantly calls the "desire to dissociate oneself from a people under attack by advertising one's own goodness." I am not, seem to say the Arendts and the Segevs, like those petty, narrowly nationalistic Jews who are always whining about their misfortunes to justify their exploitation of others; I am a universalist, a member in good standing of the human race; and the proof is that I have slaughtered the holiest Jewish cow of all, the Holocaust, and brought it as a sacrifice with which to expiate myself.

This strikes me as close to the truth. I would only add that, when it comes to the Holocaust, there *is* something for many Jews to feel guilty about—and if it is human nature to blame those who produce the greatest guilt in us, then blaming Zionism and Ben-Gurion for complicity in the Holocaust is not all that hard to understand. For the Zionists were the one element in the Jewish world that, in the 1920's and 30's, told the Jews of Europe to get out while they could. While the Jewish Left was urging Jews to stay and participate in the anti-fascist struggle; and many of the pious were exhorting them to put their trust in God; and the liberals and assimilationists were confident that the Hitlerite aberration would blow over; and all fulminated against being taken in by the self-serving doom-mongering of the Zionists, they alone consistently spoke of emigration as the only solution and had the prescience to realize, as Ben-Gurion declared in January 1935, that "The disaster which has befallen German Jewry is not limited to Germany alone. Hitler's regime places the entire Jewish people in danger."

IT IS true that what interested the Zionists was primarily emigration to Palestine—the only country, they quite rightly believed, where there was any chance of settling large numbers of Jews; true, too, that even there British immigration policy, increasingly selective in the course of the 1930's, would sooner or later have put a stop to the flow. But not only could the difference between "sooner" and "later" have saved hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives; it might, by greatly increasing the Jewish population of Palestine, have forced the British to execute the Peel Commission plan for creating a small Jewish state in the late 1930's. Had such an independent mini-state, strongly supported by Ben-Gurion as a stopgap measure, been estab-

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lished, the dream of rescuing millions might have been realizable.

But for the most part, the Jews of Europe accepted the arguments of the Zionists' opponents, who were already then accusing Zionism of feeding off, and even cooperating with, the Nazis. One of the Zionist policies most castigated in this respect was the Jewish Agency's 1933 "transfer agreement" with the Nazi ministry of economics, which—in technical violation of an attempted Jewish boycott of German goods—enabled hundreds of thousands of German Jews to come to Palestine by exchanging Jewish assets forcibly abandoned and confiscated in Germany for German industrial exports.

Such accusations had, indeed, a twisted logic, for if the Nazis' rise to power both confirmed Zionist predictions and actively encouraged Jews to leave for Palestine, it was but a small step for anti-Zionists to conclude that the Zionists had an interest in the Nazis' success, and but one step further to surmise that they must be abetting it. And after the war, still refusing to confront their guilt for having rejected and urged others to reject all of Zionism's pleas and warnings, some Jews took another step and supported the calumny that, since what had made the state of Israel possible was the Holocaust, the Zionists must have had a hand in that, too.

Shabtai Teveth does not, in *Ben-Gurion and the Holocaust*, speculate about such matters. Much as Jacob Robinson did in the mid-1960's in his *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight*, a convincing point-for-point rebuttal of Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Teveth, in the best courtroom manner, contents himself with demolishing one after another of the charges leveled by Segev and others and leaves it to us to wonder why they are still being made. It is perhaps not so great a riddle.

Skewerings

Fools' Names, Fools' Faces
by Andrew Ferguson

Atlantic Monthly. 213 pp. $22.00

Reviewed by
Daniel J. Silver

Politics and humor have been bedfellows forever. But the pairing of conservatism and humor has struck some—particularly liberals—as faintly oxymoronic. In part, this prejudice must derive from reverse snobbery: conservatives, after all, are defenders of wealth and privilege; surely nothing droll could come of *that*.

It should be clear by now, however, that contemporary conservatives are defenders first and foremost not of privilege but of the middle class and its values against the elitism of liberal academics, intellectuals, "educationists," consultants, and other assorted gurus of the "new class." In addition to a rich body of political analysis and polemics, this brand of conservatism has given birth to a new strain of satirical humor. Notable among those who have successfully found their voices in this genre are P.J. O'Rourke, Christopher Buckley, and the redoubtable *grand dame* of curmudgeons, Florence King.

The latest to enter this select group is Andrew Ferguson, barely a decade in ink but already admired for his style, wit, and political insight. These traits have been on display since the late 1980's, first in the *American Spectator* and now in the *Weekly Standard*, where Ferguson is a senior editor. Thirty-two of his essays have been collected in *Fools' Names, Fools' Faces*, a compendium of skewerings of pretentious stuffed shirts from politicians to show-business celebrities to media heavies to corporate blowhards.

In the journalistic pantheon of satirical genius, the obvious touchstone is H. L. Mencken, who cut through pretense with the savage glee of a child eviscerating a piñata. Ferguson's approach is different. Unlike the self-important Mencken, he has no pretenses himself; to the contrary, he often cultivates the persona of a regular "boob," offering himself up as a kind of sacrificial Everyman, subject like the rest of us to the intellectual and cultural depredations of the world in which he lives.

The best piece in this mode of self-exposure is on cell phones: more accurately, on the presumption that what we say and do is so important that we dare not risk losing a moment's contact with Rolodex and world. After a day spent accompanying a corporate VIP on his rigor-

Daniel J. Silver *writes frequently for* Commentary *and other publications about politics and culture.*

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ous daily rounds, Ferguson and his subject finally sit down, late at night, for "phone time":

> The VIP spoke into the phone in hushed tones, hung up, dialed again, resumed speaking in hushed tones. He repeated the pattern for several minutes, while I stared at my phone. He glanced my way only occasionally, with a puzzled look, as though I had taken off my pants. And I did feel naked, in a way. Before this extraordinarily powerful man I sat exposed as a VUP, a very unimportant person, a loser—a guy who, granted the privilege of phone time, couldn't hack it. Eventually I picked up the phone again and called my office, listening to my voice-mail greeting over and over. "That's good," I said at irregular intervals, in hushed tones.

IF THE rewards of this playing-down of self are great, so, too, are the rewards of Ferguson's sometimes uncanny ability to infiltrate alien life forms by entering into his subjects' ideological fixations and explaining them from the inside. Perhaps his most virtuoso exercise in this line is an essay on "diversity training," occasioned by a corporate "workshop," sponsored by the National MultiCultural Institute, which he attended at a swank hotel. Now, why should huge American corporations—centers, after all, of capitalism—invite anti-capitalist ideologues from the rump fringe of the New Left to corrupt their workforce? To Ferguson, the influences that have brought us to this sorry state are old-style Babbittry, New Age psychobabble, and cultural politics, a lethal combination in which business people have been persuaded that they can "goose the bottom line" by gathering together "majority" and "non-majority" types for endless talk, bonding, and "experiential" encounters—or, in other words, exercises in humiliation designed to break down the sense of dignity of the "majority" culture. "In the history of power structures," Ferguson concludes, "the white-male power structure of late-20th-century America must be the strangest of all: the first to pay people to dismantle itself."

As this example suggests, behind Ferguson's funny mask is not only an acute intelligence but a serious political sensibility. In the end, *Fools' Names, Fools' Faces* brings to bear a powerful vision of creeping social sickness; miraculously, it does so with laughter and aplomb, and no small degree of fearlessness.

Evil Counsels

Machiavelli's Virtue
by Harvey C. Mansfield
Chicago. 388 pp. $29.95

Reviewed by
Michael Anton

WHAT HATH Wicked Nick wrought? That is the question posed by Harvey Mansfield in *Machiavelli's Virtue*, his latest consideration of the still-controversial and still-misunderstood thought of Niccolò Machiavelli. Mansfield, a professor of government at Harvard, has studied Machiavelli for decades, along the way producing three translations of his works, an exhaustive commentary on his *Discourses on Livy*, and many learned essays on his political philosophy.

Machiavelli, of course, is the great Renaissance figure famous for being, as Mansfield puts it,

> the first philosopher not merely to lack respect for the just, the noble, and the sacred or even to *show* his lack of respect—but actually to *advise* all others to act without respect. [Emphasis in the original]

Maxims from Machiavelli's two most shocking and radical books, *The Prince* (1513) and the *Discourses* (1513-19), are gems of clear-headed ruthlessness: enemies and potential enemies should be summarily executed, because only those still alive can plot revenge; it is absolutely necessary for a prince to appear religious, and utterly disastrous for him actually to be religious; one should not hesitate to break one's word when interest requires it. And this is but a small sampling of what has led to centuries of attacks on the Florentine for his immorality and earned him a reputation, in Shakespeare's words, as "the murderous machiavel."

These days, however, at least in some academic quarters, Machiavelli's wickedness tends to get explained away. There are those who assert that the philosopher was merely describing evil, not embracing it. And there are others who say his terrible counsels are somehow justified or compensated for by the republican sentiments to which he occasionally gave voice. For Mansfield, it is a relatively simple task to confront and refute these views. Against the former, he shows that the question of whether or not Machiavelli advocates "a compromise with evil" is debatable only if one does not really believe such a thing as evil exists. And against the latter, he proves that the real Machiavelli is, if anything, even more "Machiavellian" than older critics assumed.

A MORE difficult task before Mansfield is to say what exactly Machiavelli was intending to accomplish in proffering his evil advice. Though *Machiavelli's Virtue* is a collection of discrete essays written over many years, at its core is a coherent ac-

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count of Machiavelli's central project. According to Mansfield, what Machiavelli sought was the complete overthrow of the lofty and—to him—unattainable goals set for man by biblical religion and classical philosophy, in favor of ends that were actually achievable on this earth.

At bottom, in Machiavelli's view, Christianity and classical philosophy were doctrines that kept man weak. If man were to rise to the greatness of which he was capable, they would have to be replaced with wholly new modes of thought. These, Machiavelli saw it as his calling to provide.

The essence of Machiavelli's new teaching is encapsulated in some of the most famous words from *The Prince*:

> [I]t is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation.

In other words, and notwithstanding what the prelates say, God's laws were written by men yet bear virtually no correspondence to the way men actually behave; therefore, it is both foolish and "ruinous" to try to live up to them. Moreover, contrary to what the classical philosophers teach, man has no duty to fulfill any end or purpose in his nature, for the simple reason that none exists; he is free to do pretty much what he wants.

In fact, as Mansfield points out, Machiavelli *proves* neither of these claims, which would be tantamount to refuting both biblical religion and classical philosophy. Rather, he assumes both biblical religion and classical philosophy to be false, and then proceeds to mount a frontal assault on what has followed from them. But so devastating was this attack that it accomplished, as Mansfield writes, a "great revolution in thought," a revolution that would later be continued and extended by such thinkers as Hobbes, Locke, Bacon, and Descartes.

Things we today take for granted—among them the distinction between state and society, and the bounties that result from the conquest of nature—all either originate with Machiavelli or are built on groundwork that he laid. And we moderns, unconscious Machiavellians that we are, do not even realize it. Mansfield's intent in this book is to wake us up, both to the fact of Machiavelli's revolution and to its character.

But how precisely are we to assess its character—good, bad, or indifferent? Readers who hope to learn Harvey Mansfield's answer to this question will find themselves disappointed. As in his previous book, the dense and difficult *Taming the Prince* (1989), Mansfield appears to have

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taken to heart at least one piece of Machiavelli's advice—to proceed with a "mixture of boldness and caution." He writes elliptically, often making pregnant suggestions that leave the reader laboring to deliver their meaning. In this, as in much else, he follows his mentor, Leo Strauss, to whose groundbreaking *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (1958) Mansfield's book may be described as a kind of sequel.

Mansfield is candid about his debt to Strauss—he devotes an entire chapter to an examination of how Strauss's book has been received and cites him repeatedly in every other chapter. But one thing Strauss made clear was his disfavor of the great change in thought that Machiavelli had brought about. Strauss's entire intellectual career can be viewed as an attempt to recover the classical-biblical understanding that Machiavelli destroyed.

By declining to render judgment on Machiavelli's revolution even as he presents an account that papers over none of its wickedness, Mansfield invites speculation that he may in fact welcome it. Or perhaps he believes that Machiavelli's revolution is, as Machiavelli hoped it would be, "permanent and irreversible," and that we simply must make the best of it. Or he may simply feel that Strauss has said everything to be said about the moral character of Machiavelli's legacy, and has chosen simply to dwell on those aspects of his thought that stand in greater need of amplification.

Whatever the case, judgment on Machiavelli's revolution can only be passed with a full understanding of what it entailed in the mind of its progenitor. On that score, Mansfield has made a distinctive, and distinguished, contribution, one that leaves us in a far better position to say for ourselves whether Machiavelli does indeed deserve the appellation, wicked.

Pedagogues

The Schools We Need: And Why We Don't Have Them

by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.

Doubleday. 317 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Wilfred M. McClay

WHY ARE American schools so bad? Why do our children routinely place near (or at) the bottom of the list when rated against students in other developed nations? Our education establishment, skilled in the art of self-exonerating spin, has a plethora of explanations for this dismal state of affairs. Chief among them is a cheap resort to American exceptionalism: no nation, we are told, is, or ever has been, so multicultural, so diverse, or so complex; therefore, all international comparisons are misleading, if not meaningless.

E.D. Hirsch, Jr. will have none of this. In his latest book he places the blame squarely on the false and pernicious ideas of American educationists themselves. *The Schools We Need* is a *tour de force* of unsparing critique, directed almost entirely against the still-regnant Progressive ideals that have distorted American educational thought and practice for most of the 20th century.

Hirsch, who first attracted wide notice ten years ago with *Cultural Literacy*, a plea for a shared fund of general knowledge as the cement of democratic citizenship, is hardly the first to criticize Progressive principles. He duly acknowledges his debt to distinguished predecessors, ranging from Arthur Bestor to Charles Sykes. But there are three qualities that set *The Schools We Need* apart. First, it offers a compact and lucid history of American educational thought in the past century, showing precisely how the misconceptions of the present are rooted in certain characteristic features of the past. Second, it measures the reiterated claims of educationists against the latest empirical research—an exercise which nearly always serves to disconfirm those claims. Third and perhaps most important, it argues convincingly that the implementation of Progressive educational ideas has actually served to deepen the very class stratification the Progressives originally sought to combat. Only by discarding Progressivism, Hirsch concludes, can we hope to restore the vitality of the common-school idea put forward so long ago by Horace Mann and his successors.

THE PROBLEM, in Hirsch's rendering, began in the American fondness for romanticism, with its feckless assumptions about human nature, about the innocent perfection of childhood, and about the "unnaturalness" of formalized pedagogy. That romantic background melded nicely with the Progressives' "child-centered" educational agenda to produce two "fundamental tenets." The first of these Hirsch calls "formalism": the belief that the acquisition of factual knowledge is less important than the acquisition of formal tools (like "critical thinking") that will enable future learning. The second is "naturalism": the belief that education is most effective when connected to natural goals and dispositions, rather than being tied to the forced and artificial setting of the classroom.

Both of these tenets, Hirsch shows, are half-truths at best. Formalism fails even on its own terms, because there is no such thing as the acquisition of a formal skill without the simultaneous acquisition of what psychologists call "domain-specific" content knowledge. In other words, one learns to learn by learning about something *in particular*. It follows that acquiring general skills,

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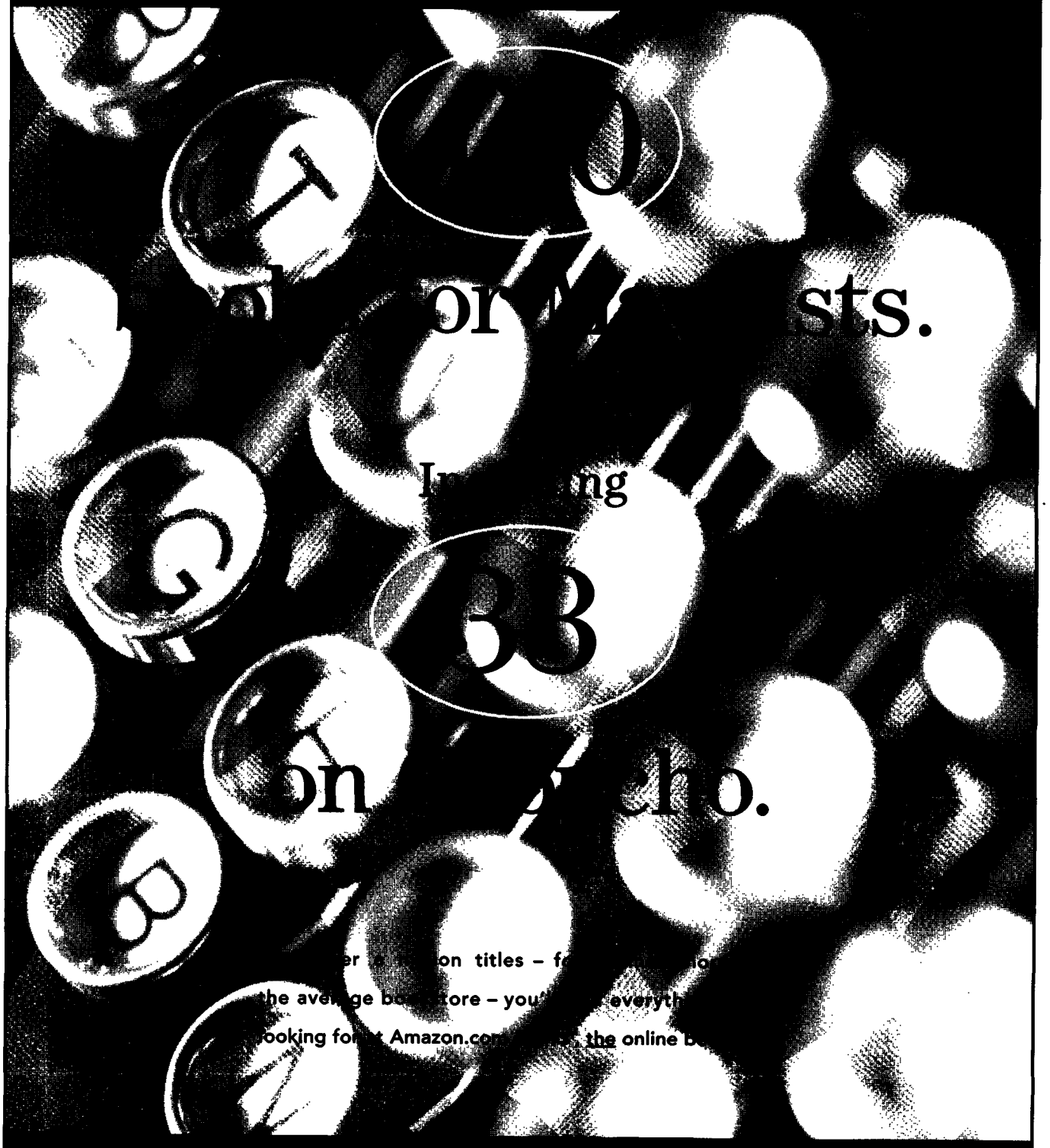

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to the extent this is possible at all, depends upon an ample fund of knowledge. Not only is such knowledge important for citizenship, as Hirsch argued in *Cultural Literacy*, it is also essential for continued learning itself.

As for naturalism, the evidence of cognitive-psychological research indicates that there is, in fact, nothing especially natural about certain vital skills (reading, for example), and efforts to teach these skills in more natural ways (like whole-language instruction) are far less effective than traditional methods (like phonics) which rely upon elements of rote memorization or repetition. The notion that children should be asked to do only those things that are "developmentally appropriate"—an educationese mantra that Hirsch decries as pseudo-scientific—merely serves to hold back their development, and particularly so in the case of the socially disadvantaged.

WHY, THEN, if these tenets are so egregiously false and pernicious, have they shown such astonishing staying power? Because educationists have encapsulated themselves, for the better part of a century, within a mindset that flatters their professional pretensions while rendering them impervious to external criticism. Hirsch traces the origins of this "thought-world" to Teachers College at Columbia University, and particularly to the influence of William Heard Kilpatrick, whose writings, and whose work in training thousands of future professors of education, left a decisive mark upon the field. Recognizing that the key to professional status was the cultivation of a distinctive academic specialty, Kilpatrick and his colleagues made the study of the learning process itself their bailiwick, thus reinforcing the subordination of subject knowledge to pedagogy.

This arrangement has been deeply injurious both to the cause of knowledge and to the cause of pedagogy. But that is hardly all. Progressive educational ideas, Hirsch argues, have actually led not only to "practical failure" but to "greater social inequity." They have had this effect because they do nothing to counterbalance the enormous edge in school that is enjoyed by relatively advantaged students who come from a reasonably settled family and home life. Paradoxically, whereas Progressive education reinforces existing class hierarchies, "traditional," "mechanical," "rote," and other now-forbidden, content-rich pedagogies actually do far more to level the playing field, and to give disadvantaged students a chance to acquire some of the core knowledge which, through no fault of their own, they lack. It follows, as Hirsch puts it, that "The only practical way to achieve liberalism's aim of greater social justice"—the avowed aim, that is, of the Progressives themselves—"is to pursue conservative educational policies."

OF COURSE he is right. But given the current professional and political disposition of the profession, an about-face in the direction of "conservative educational policies" is as likely to happen as Edward M. Kennedy's enlisting in the Christian Coalition. This is to take nothing away from the admirably constructive criticisms and suggestions Hirsch has proffered in *The Schools We Need*. But if the educationists' monopoly is to be broken—as Hirsch acknowledges it must be before anything can change—it is not going to happen overnight.

Moreover, the process is bound to be far more disruptive than any of us would care to admit, and would almost certainly entail the acceptance of a much higher degree of educational pluralism than Hirsch, for one, as a proponent of national standards, would find desirable. In this connection, it is puzzling that he has so little to say about charter schools, school choice, and other contemporary phenomena that (along with the continuing health of private schools) hold the greatest potential for breaking the monopoly.

The rise of home-schooling, which Hirsch does not discuss at all, is of particular interest. This is one of the most underreported developments of our time, flying as it does below the radar of most of our cultural elites, who could no more imagine teaching their own children than churning their own butter. But a growing number of Americans are doing just that, and often with admirable results.

This picture is both gratifying and disturbing to contemplate. Gratifying, because it confirms that this is still a substantially free country, and that there are still men and women in it who are deeply and concretely dedicated to the welfare of their children. Disturbing, because it means that many of our most conscientious citizens have turned their backs on one of our fundamental institutions, an institution that, for all its flaws, has served as an engine of mobility and self-improvement for most of the nation's history.

In the end, the intellectual problems Hirsch addresses may be easier to solve than the political ones, which seem almost intractable. Either the "schools we need" will find a way of attracting disaffected parents back into the system—or else these parents are going to have to be given additional means of circumventing the existing system entirely. At the moment, the second outcome seems a likelier prospect than the first.

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Research on genetic diseases – notably many diseases of childhood – is entering an exciting, promising new phase. As scientists intensify the process of deciphering the secrets of the human genetic blueprint, their findings yield critical new clues to the development of genetic diseases and to the search for new therapies. ❧ The figures are staggering: deciphering the blueprint means the ultimate sequencing of 3,000,000,000 letters of the human genetic code. Genetic diseases number about 5,000. ❧ The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, takes pride in its commitment to both these research challenges. Years ago, discoveries in a Weizmann laboratory led to the first uses of amniocentesis to examine the fetus and diagnose hereditary illnesses. Among current projects on the Weizmann agenda are studies of fundamental embryonic development, Down syndrome, low birth weight, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, insulin substitutes and vaccinations against juvenile diabetes. The establishment of the Bioinformatics Genome Research Center on the Weizmann campus underscores the growing contributions of Institute scientists to the World Human Genome Project. ❧ It's another example of how support for basic scientific research yields practical benefits previously beyond reach.

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